

THE
WORKS
OF
WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

VOL. V.
ROKBY
CANTO 1 — 6.

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MONACENSIS.

TO
JOHN B. S. MORRITT, Esq.

THIS POEM,

THE SCENE OF WHICH IS LAID IN HIS BEAUTIFUL
DEMESNE OF ROKEBY,

IS INSCRIBED,

IN TOKEN OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP,

BY

WALTER SCOTT.

TO
JOHN D. S. MORRIS, Esq.

THIS BOOK

THE SCENE OF WHICH IS SET IN THE HISTORY

OF THE

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OF THE

WALTER SCOTT

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Scene of this Poem is laid at Rokeby, near Greta-Bridge, in Yorkshire, and shifts to the adjacent fortress of Barnard-Castle, and to other places in that Vicinity.

The Time occupied by the Action is a space of Five Days, Three of which are supposed to elapse between the end of the Fifth and beginning of the Sixth Canto.

The date of the supposed events is immediately subsequent to the great Battle of Marston-Moor, 3d July, 1644. This period of public confusion has been chosen, without any purpose of combining the Fable with the Military or Political Events of the Civil War, but only as affording a degree of probability to the Fictitious Narrative now presented to the Public.

R O K E B Y.

CANTO FIRST.

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CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE Moon is in her summer glow,
But hoarse and high the breezes blow,
And, racking o'er her face, the cloud
Varies the tincture of her shroud;
On Barnard's towers, and Tees's stream,
She changes as a guilty dream,
When Conscience, with remorse and fear,
Goads sleeping Fancy's wild career.
Her light seems now the blush of shame,
Seems now fierce anger's darker flame,
Shifting that shade, to come and go,
Like apprehension's hurried glow;
Then sorrow's livery dims the air,
And dies in darkness, like despair.

Such varied hues the warder sees
Reflected from the woodland Tees,
Then from old Baliol's tower looks forth,
Sees the clouds mustering in the north,
Hears, upon turret-roof and wall,
By fits the plashing rain-drop fall,
Lists to the breeze's boding sound,
And wraps his shaggy mantle round.

II.

Those towers, which in the changeful gleam
Throw murky shadows on the stream,
Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
The emotions of whose troubled breast,
In wild and strange confusion driven,
Rival the flitting rack of heaven.
Ere sleep stern OSWALD's senses tied,
Oft had he changed his weary side,
Composed his limbs, and vainly sought
By effort strong to banish thought.
Sleep came at length, but with a train
Of feelings true and fancies vain,
Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
The expected future with the past.
Conscience, anticipating time,
Already rues the unacted crime,
And calls her furies forth, to shake
The sounding scourge and hissing snake;

While her poor victim's outward throes
Bear witness to his mental woes,
And shew what lesson may be read
Beside a sinner's restless bed.

III.

Thus Oswald's labouring feelings trace
Strange changes in his sleeping face,
Rapid and ominous as these
With which the moon-beams tinge the Tees.
There might be seen of shame the blush,
There anger's dark and fiercer flush,
While the perturbed sleeper's hand
Seemed grasping dagger-knife, or brand.
Relaxed that grasp, the heavy sigh,
The tear in the half-opening eye,
The pallid cheek and brow, confessed
That grief was busy in his breast;
Nor paused that mood — a sudden start
Impelled the life-blood from the heart;
Features convulsed, and mutterings dread,
Show terror reigns in sorrow's stead.
That pang the painful slumber broke,
And Oswald, with a start, awoke.

IV.

He woke, and feared again to close
His eye-lids in such dire repose;

He woke, — to watch the lamp, and tell
From hour to hour the castle-bell,
Or listen to the owlet's cry,
Or the sad breeze that whistles by,
Or catch, by fits, the tuneless rhyme
With which the warder cheats the time,
And envying think, how, when the sun
Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
Couched on his straw, and fancy-free,
He sleeps like careless infancy.

V.

Far town-ward sounds a distant tread,
And Oswald, starting from his bed,
Hath caught it, though no human ear,
Unsharpened by revenge and fear,
Could e'er distinguish horse's clank,
Until it reached the castle-bank.
Now nigh and plain the sound appears,
The warder's challenge now he hears,
Then clanking chains and levers tell,
That o'er the moat the draw-bridge fell,
And, in the castle-court below,
Voices are heard, and torches glow,
As marshalling the stranger's way,
Straight for the room where Oswald lay;
The cry was, — "Tidings from the host,
Of weight — a messenger comes post." —

Stifling the tumult of his breast,
His answer Oswald thus expressed —
“Bring food and wine, and trim the fire;
Admit the stranger, and retire.” —

VI.

The stranger came with heavy stride,
The morion's plumes his visage hide,
And the buff-coat, in ample fold,
Mantles his form's gigantic mould.
Full slender answer deigned he
To Oswald's anxious courtesy,
But marked, by a disdainful smile,
He saw and scorned the petty wile,
When Oswald changed the torch's place,
Anxious that on the soldier's face
Its partial lustre might be thrown,
To shew his looks, yet hide his own.
His guest, the while, laid low aside
The ponderous cloak of tough bull's hide,
And to the torch glanced broad and clear
The corslet of a cuirassier;
Then from his brows the casque he drew,
And from the dank plume dashed the dew,
From gloves of mail relieved his hands,
And spread them to the kindling brands,
And, turning to the genial board,
Without a health, or pledge, or word.

Of meet and social reverence said,
Deeply he drank, and fiercely fed!
As free from ceremony's sway,
As famished wolf that tears his prey.

VII.

With deep impatience, tinged with fear,
His host beheld him gorge his cheer,
And quaff the full carouze, that lent
His brow a fiercer hardiment.
Now Oswald stood a space aside,
Now paced the room with hasty stride,
In feverish agony to learn
Tidings of deep and dread concern,
Cursing each moment that his guest
Protracted o'er his ruffian feast.
Yet, viewing with alarm, at last,
The end of that uncouth repast,
Almost he seemed their haste to rue,
As, at his sign, his train withdrew,
And left him with the stranger, free
To question of his mystery.
Then did his silence long proclaim
A struggle between fear and shame.

VIII.

Much in the stranger's mien appears,
To justify suspicious fears.

On his dark face a scorching clime,
 And toil, had done the work of time,
 Roughen'd the brow, the temples bared,
 And sable hairs with silver shared,
 Yet left — what age alone could tame —
 The lip of pride, the eye of flame;
 The full-drawn lip that upward curl'd,
 The eye, that seem'd to scorn the world.
 That lip had terror never blanch'd;
 Ne'er in that eye had tear-drop quench'd
 The flash severe of swarthy glow,
 That mock'd at pain, and knew not woe;
 Inured to danger's direst form,
 Tornade and earthquake, flood and storm,
 Death had he seen by sudden blow,
 By wasting plague, by tortures slow,
 By mine or breach, by steel or ball,
 Knew all his shapes, and scorn'd them all.

IX.

But yet, though BERTRAM'S hardend look,
 Unmoved, could blood and danger brook,
 Still worse than apathy had place
 On his swart brow and callous face;
 For evil passions, cherish'd long,
 Had plough'd them with impressions strong.
 All that gives gloss to sin, all gay
 Light folly, past with youth away,

XVII.

B

But rooted stood, in manhood's hour.
The weeds of vice without their flower.
And yet the soil in which they grew,
Had it been tamed when life was new,
Had depth and vigour to bring forth
The hardier fruits of virtuous worth.
Not that, e'en then, his heart had known
The gentler feelings' kindly tone;
But lavish waste had been refined
To bounty in his chasten'd mind,
And lust of gold, that waste to feed,
Been lost in love of glory's meed,
And, frantic then no more, his pride
Had ta'en fair virtue for its guide.

X.

Even now, by conscience unrestrain'd,
Clogg'd by gross vice, by slaughter stain'd,
Still knew his daring soul to soar,
And mastery o'er the mind he bore;
For meaner guilt, or heart less hard,
Quail'd beneath Bertram's bold regard.
And this felt Oswald, while in vain
He strove, by many a winding train,
To lure his sullen guest to show,
Unask'd, the news he long'd to know,
While on far other subject hung
His heart than falter'd from his tongue.

Yet nought for that his guest did deign
To note or spare his secret pain,
But still, in stern and stubborn sort,
Returned him answer dark and short,
Or started from the theme, to range
In loose digression wild and strange,
And forced the embarrassed host to buy,
By query close, direct reply.

XI.

Awhile he glozed upon the cause
Of Commons, Covenant, and Laws,
And Church Reformed — but felt rebuke
Beneath grim Bertram's sneering look.
Then stammered — "Has a field been fought?
Has Bertram news of battle brought?
For sure a soldier, famed so far
In foreign fields for feats of war,
On eve of fight ne'er left the host,
Until the field were won and lost." —
"Here, in your towers by circling Tees,
You, Oswald Wycliffe, rest at ease;
Why deem it strange that others come
To share such safe and easy home,
From fields where danger, death, and toil,
Are the reward of civil broil?" —
— "Nay, mock not, friend! since well we know
The near advances of the foe,

To mar our northern army's work,
Encamped before beleaguered York;
Thy horse with valiant Fairfax lay,
And must have fought — how went the day? —

XII.

“Would'st hear the tale? — On Marston heath
Met, front to front, the ranks of death;
Flourished the trumpets fierce, and now
Fired was each eye, and flush'd each brow;
On either side loud clamours ring,
“God and the Cause! — God and the King!”
Right English all, they rushed to blows,
With nought to win, and all to lose.
I could have laughed — but lacked the time —
To see, in phrenesy sublime,
How the fierce zealots fought and bled,
For king or state, as humour led;
Some for a dream of public good,
Some for church-tippet, gown, and hood,
Draining their veins, in death to claim
A patriot's or a martyr's name. —
Led Bertram Risingham the hearts,
That countered there on adverse parts,
No superstitious fool had I
Sought El Dorados in the sky!
Chili had heard me through her states,
And Lima oped her silver gates,

Rich Mexico I had marched through,
And sacked the splendours of Peru,
Till sunk Pizarro's daring name,
And, Cortez, thine, in Bertram's fame." —
— "Still from the purpose wilt thou stray!
Good gentle friend, how went the day?" —

XIII.

"Good am I deemed at trumpet-sound,
And good where goblets dance the round,
Though gentle ne'er was joined, till now,
With rugged Bertram's breast and brow. —
But I resume. The battle's rage
Was like the strife which currents wage,
Where Orinoco, in his pride,
Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
A rival sea of roaring war;
While, in ten thousand eddies driven,
The billows fling their foam to heaven,
And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
Where rolls the river, where the main.
Even thus, upon the bloody field,
The eddyng tides of conflict wheeled
Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
Hurling against our spears a line
Of gallants, fiery as their wine;

Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
In zeal's despite began to reel.
What wouldst thou more? — in tumult tost,
Our leaders fell, our ranks were lost.
A thousand men, who drew the sword
For both the Houses and the Word,
Preach'd forth from hamlet, grange, and down,
To curb the crosier and the crown,
Now, stark and stiff, lie stretched in gore,
And ne'er shall rail at mitre more. —
Thus fared it, when I left the fight,
With the good Cause and Commons' right." —

XIV.

«Disastrous news!» dark Wycliffe said;
Assumed despondence bent his head,
While troubled joy was in his eye,
The well-feigned sorrow to belie. —
«Disastrous news! — when needed most,
Told ye not that your chiefs were lost?
Complete the woeful tale, and say,
Who fell upon that fatal day;
What leaders of repute and name
Bought by their death a deathless fame.
If such my direst foeman's doom,
My tears shall dew his honoured tomb. —
No answer? — Friend, of all our host,
Thou knowest whom I should hate the most;

Whom thou too, once, wert wont to hate,
Yet leavest me doubtful of his fate" —
With look unmoved, — "Of friend or foe,
Aught", answer'd Bertram, "wouldst thou know,
Demand in simple terms and plain,
A soldier's answer shalt thou gain;
For question dark, or riddle high,
I have nor judgment nor reply." —

XV.

The wrath his art and fear suppressed;
Now blazed at once in Wycliffe's breast;
And brave, from man so meanly born,
Roused his hereditary scorn.
— "Wretch! hast thou paid thy bloody debt?
PHILIP of MORTHAM, lives he yet?
False to thy patron or thine oath,
Trait'rous or perjured, one or both,
Slave! hast thou kept thy promise plight,
To slay thy leader in the fight?" —
Then from his seat the soldier sprung,
And Wycliffe's hand he strongly wrung;
His grasp, as hard as glove of mail,
Forced the red blood-drop from the nail —
"A health!" he cried; and, ere he quaffed,
Flung from him Wycliffe's hand, and laughed:
— "Now, Oswald Wycliffe, speaks thy heart
Now playest thou well thy genuine part!"

Worthy, but for thy craven fear,
Like me to roam a buccaneer.
What reck'st thou of the Cause divine,
If Morthames wealth and lands be thine?
What carest thou for beleaguered York,
If this good hand have done its work?
Or what though Fairfax and his best
Are reddening Marston's swarthy breast,
If Philip Mortham with them lie,
Lending his life-blood to the dye? —
Sit then! and as mid comrades free
Carousing after victory,
When tales are told of blood and fear,
That boys and women shrink to hear,
From point to point I frankly tell
The deed of death as it befell.

XVI.

«When purposed vengeance I forego,
Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe;
And when an insult I forgive,
Then brand me as slave, and live! —
Philip of Mortham is with those
Whom Bertram Risingham calls foes;
Or whom more sure revenge attends,
If numbered with ungrateful friends.
As was his wont, ere battle glowed,
Along the marshalled ranks he rode,

And wore his vizor up the while.
I saw his melancholy smile,
When, full opposed in front, he knew
Where ROKEBY's kindred banner flew.
"And thus," he said, "will friends divide!" —
I heard, and thought how, side by side,
We two had turn'd the battle's tide,
In many a well-debated field,
Where Bertram's breast was Philip's shield.
I thought on Darien's desarts pale,
Where death bestrides the evening gale,
How o'er my friend my cloak I threw,
And fenceless faced the deadly dew;
I thought on Quariana's cliff,
Where, rescued from our foundering skiff,
Through the white breakers' wrath I bore
Exhausted Mortham to the shore;
And when his side an arrow found,
I suck'd the Indian's venom'd wound.
These thoughts like torrents rush'd along,
To sweep away my purpose strong.

XVII.

"Hearts are not flint, and flints are rent;
Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent.
When Mortham bade me, as of yore,
Be near him in the battle's roar,
I scarcely saw the spears laid low,

I scarcely heard the trumpets blow;
Lost was the war in inward strife,
Debating Mortham's death or life.
'Twas then I thought, how, lured to come,
As partner of his wealth and home,
Years of piratic wandering o'er,
With him I sought our native shore:
But Mortham's lord grew far estranged
From the bold heart with whom he ranged;
Doubts, horrors, superstitious fears,
Sadden'd and dimm'd descending years;
The wily priests their victim sought,
And damn'd each free-born deed and thought.
Then must I seek another home,
My licence shook his sober dome;
If gold he gave, in one wild day
I revell'd thrice the sum away.
An idle outcast then I stray'd,
Unfit for tillage or for trade,
Deem'd, like the steel of rusted lance,
Useless and dangerous at once.
The women fear'd my hardy look,
At my approach the peaceful shook;
The merchant saw my glance of flame,
And lock'd his hoards when Bertram came;
Each child of coward peace kept far
From the neglected son of war.

XVIII.

“But civil discord gave the call,
And made my trade the trade of all.
By Mortham urged, I came again
His vassals to the fight to train.
What guerdon waited on my care?
I could not cant of creed or prayer;
Sour fanatics each trust obtained,
And I, dishonoured and disdained,
Gained but the high and happy lot,
In these poor arms to front the shot! —
All this thou know'st, thy gestures tell;
Yet hear it o'er, and mark it well.
'Tis honour bids me now relate
Each circumstance of Mortham's fate.

XIX.

“Thoughts, from the tongue that slowly part,
Glance quick as lightning through the heart.
As my spur pressed my courser's side,
Philip of Mortham's cause was tried,
And, ere the charging squadrons mixed,
His plea was cast, his doom was fixed
I watched him through the doubtful fray,
That changed as March's moody day,
Till, like a stream that bursts its bank,
Fierce Rupert thundered on our flank.
'Twas then, midst tumult, smoke, and strife,

Where each man fought for death or life,
'Twas then I fired my petronel,
And Mortham, steed and rider, fell.
One dying look he upward cast,
Of wrath and anguish — 'twas his last.
Think not that there I stopped, to view
What of the battle should ensue;
But ere I cleared that bloody press,
Our northern horse ran masterless;
Monckton and Mitton told the news,
How troops of Roundheads choked the Ouse,
And many a bonny Scot, aghast,
Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
Cursing the day when zeal or meed
First lured their Lesley o'er the Tweed.
Yet when I reached the banks of Swale,
Had rumour learned another tale;
With his barbed horse, fresh tidings say
Stout Cromwell has redeemed the day:
But whether false the news, or true,
Oswald, I reckon as light as you." —

XX.

Not then by Wycliffe might be shown,
How his pride startled at the tone
In which his complice, fierce and free
Asserted guilt's equality.
In smoothest terms his speech he wove,

Of endless friendship, faith, and love;
Promised and vowed in courteous sort
But Bertram broke professions short.

„Wycliffe, be sure not here I stay,

No, scarcely till the rising day;

Warned by the legends of my youth,

I trust not an associate's truth.

Do not my native dales prolong

Of Percy Rede the tragic song,

Trained forward to his bloody fall,

By Girsonfield, that treacherous Hall?

Oft, by the Pringle's haunted side,

The shepherd sees his spectre glide.

And near the spot that gave me name,

The moated mound of Risingham,

Where Reed upon her margin sees

Sweet Woodburn's cottages and trees,

Some ancient sculptor's art has shown

An outlaw's image on the stone;

Unmatched in strength, a giant he,

With quivered back, and kirtled knee,

Ask how he died, that hunter bold,

The tameless monarch of the wold,

And age and infancy can tell,

By brother's treachery he fell.

Thus warned by legends of my youth,

I trust to no associate's truth.

XXI.

« When last we reasoned of this deed,
Nought, I bethink me, was agreed,
Or by what rule, or when, or where,
The wealth of Mortham we should share;
Then list, while I the portion name,
Our differing laws give each to claim.
Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,
Her rules of heritage must own;
They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
And these I yield: — do thou revere
The statutes of the Buccaneer.
Friend to the sea, and foeman sworn
To all that on her waves are borne,
When falls a mate in battle broil,
His comrade heirs his portioned spoil;
When dies in fight a daring foe,
He claims his wealth who struck the blow;
And either rule to me assigns
Those spoils of Indian seas and mines,
Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark;
Ingot of gold and diamond spark,
Chalice and plate from churches borne,
And gems from shrieking beauty torn,
Each string of pearl, each silver bar,
And all the wealth of western war;
I go to search, where, dark and deep,

Those trans-atlantic treasures sleep.
Thou must along — for, lacking thee,
The heir will scarce find entrance free;
And then farewell. I haste to try
Each varied pleasure wealth can buy;
When cloyed each wish, these wars afford
Fresh work for Bertram's restless sword." —

XXII.

An undecided answer hung
On Oswald's hesitating tongue.
Despite his craft, he heard with awe
This ruffian stabber fix the law;
While his own troubled passions veer
Through hatred, joy, regret, and fear: —
Joyed at the soul that Bertram flies,
He grudged the murderer's mighty prize,
Hated his pride's presumptuous tone,
And fear'd to wend with him alone.
At length, that middle course to steer,
To cowardice and craft so dear,
"His charge", he said, "would ill allow
His absence from the fortress now;
WILFRID on Bertram should attend,
His son should journey with his friend." —

XXIII.

Contempt kept Bertram's anger down.
And wreathed to savage smile his frown.
"Wilfrid, or thou — 'tis one to me,
Whichever bears the golden key.
Yet think not but I mark, and smile
To mark, thy poor and selfish wile!
If injury from me you fear,
What, Oswald Wycliffe, shields thee here?
I've sprung from walls more high than these,
I've swam through deeper streams than Tees.
Might I not stab thee, ere one yell
Could rouse the distant sentinel?
Start not — it is not my design,
But, if it were, weak fence were thine;
And, trust me, that, in time of need,
This hand hath done more desperate deed.
Go, haste and rouse thy slumbering son;
Time calls, and I must needs be gone." —

XXIV.

Nought of his sire's ungenerous part
Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart;
A heart too soft from early life
To hold with fortune needful strife.
His sire, while yet a hardier race
Of numerous sons were Wycliffe's grace

On Wilfrid set contemptuous brand,
For feeble heart and forceless hand;
But a fond mother's care and joy
Were center'd in her sickly boy.
No touch of childhood's frolic mood
Shewed the elastic spring of blood;
Hour after hour he loved to pore
On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,
But turned from martial scenes and light,
From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
To ponder Jaques' moral strain,
And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
And weep himself to soft repose
O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.

XXV.

In youth he sought not pleasures found
By youth in horse, and hawk, and hound,
But loved the quiet joys that wake
By lonely stream and silent lake;
In Deepdale's solitude to lie,
Where all is cliff and copse and sky;
To climb Catcastle's dizzy peak,
Or lone Pendragon's mound to seek.
Such was his wont; and there his dream
Soared on some wild fantastic theme,
Of faithful love, or ceaseless Spring,
Till Contemplation's wearied wing

XVII.

C

The enthusiast could no more sustain,
And sad he sunk to earth again.

XXVI.

He loved — as many a lay can tell,
Preserved in Stanmore's lonely dell;
For his was minstrel's skill, he caught
The art unteachable, untaught;
He loved — his soul did nature frame
For love', and fancy nursed the flame;
Vainly he loved — for seldom swain
Of such soft mould is loved again;
Silent he loved — in every gaze
Was passion, friendship in his phrase.
So mused his life away — till died
His brethren all, their father's pride.
Wilfrid is now the only heir
Of all his stratagems and care,
And destined, darkling, to pursue
Ambition's maze by Oswald's clue.

XXVII.

Wilfrid must love and woo the bright
Matilda, heir of Rokeby's knight.
To love her was an easy hest,
The secret empress of his breast;
To woo her was a harder task

To one that durst not hope or ask ;
Yet all Matilda could, she gave
In pity to her gentle slave ;
Friendship, esteem, and fair regard,
And praise, the poet's best reward !
She read the tales his taste approved,
And sung the lays he framed or loved ;
Yet, loth to nurse the fatal flame
Of hopeless love in friendship's name,
In kind caprice she oft withdrew
The favouring glance to friendship due,
Then grieved to see her victim's pain,
And gave the dangerous smiles again.

XXVIII.

So did the suit of Wilfrid stand,
When war's loud summons waked the land.
Three banners, floating o'er the Tees,
The woe-foreboding peasant sees;
In concert oft they braved of old
The bordering Scot's incursion bold ;
Frowning defiance in their pride,
Their vassals now and lords divide.
From his fair hall on Greta banks,
The Knight of Rokeby led his ranks,
To aid the valiant northern Earls,
Who drew the sword for royal Charles;
Mortham, by marriage near allied, —

His sister had been Rokeby's bride,
Though long before the civil fray,
In peaceful grave the lady lay, —
Philip of Mortham raised his band,
And march'd at Fairfax's command;
While Wycliffe, bound by many a train
Of kindred art with wily Vane,
Less prompt to brave the bloody field,
Made Barnard's battlements his shield,
Secured them with his Lunedale powers,
And for the Commons held the towers.

XXIX.

The lovely heir of Rokeby's Knight
Waits in his halls the event of fight;
For England's war revered the claim
Of every unprotected name,
And spared, amid its fiercest rage,
Childhood and womanhood and age.
But Wilfrid, son to Rokeby's foe,
Must the dear privilege forego,
By Greta's side, in evening grey,
To steal upon Matilda's way,
Striving, with fond hypocrisy,
For careless step and vacant eye;
Calming each anxious look and glance,
To give the meeting all to chance,
Or framing as a fair excuse,

The book, the pencil, or the muse;
Something to give, to sing, to say,
Some modern tale, some ancient lay.
Then, while the longed-for minutes last, —
Ah! minutes quickly over-past! —
Recording each expression free,
Of kind or careless courtesy,
Each friendly look, each softer tone,
As food for fancy when alone.
All this is o'er — but still, unseen,
Wilfrid may lurk in Eastwood green,
To watch Matilda's wonted round,
While springs his heart at every sound.
She comes! — 'tis but a passing sight,
Yet serves to cheat his weary night;
She comes not — He will wait the hour,
When her lamp lightens in the tower;
'Tis something yet, if, as she past,
Her shade is o'er the lattice cast.
"What is my life, my hope?" he said;
"Alas! a transitory shade." —

XXX.

Thus wore his life, though reason strove
For mastery in vain with love,
Forcing upon his thoughts the sum
Of present woe and ills to come,
While still he turned impatient ear

From Truth's intrusive voice severe,
Gentle, indifferent, and subdued,
In all but this, unmoved he viewed
Each outward change of ill and good :
But Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
Was Fancy's spoiled and wayward child;
In her bright car she bade him ride,
With one fair form to grace his side,
Or, in some wild and lone retreat,
Flung her high spells around his seat,
Bathed in her dew's his languid head,
Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
For him her opiates gave to flow,
Which he who tastes can ne'er forego,
And placed him in her circle, free
From every stern reality,
Till, to the Visionary, seem
Her day-dreams truth, and truth a dream.

XXXI.

Woe to the youth whom Fancy gains,
Winning from Reason's hand the reins,
Pity and woe! for such a mind
Is soft, contemplative, and kind;
And woe to those who train such youth,
And spare to press the rights of truth,
The mind to strengthen and anneal,
While on the stithy glows the steel!

O teach him, while your lessons last,
To judge the present by the past;
Remind him of each wish pursued,
How rich it glowed with promised good;
Remind him of each wish enjoyed,
How soon his hopes possession cloyed!
Tell him, we play unequal game,
Whene'er we shoot by Fancy's aim;
And, ere he strip him for her race,
Shew the conditions of the chase.
Two Sisters by the goal are set,
Cold Disappointment and Regret;
One disenchants the winner's eyes,
And strips of all its worth the prize,
While one augments its gaudy show,
More to enhance the loser's woe.
The victor sees his fairy gold,
Transformed, when won, to drossy mold,
But still the vanquished mourns his loss,
And rues, as gold, that glittering dross.

XXXII.

More would'st thou know — yon tower survey,
Yon couch unpressed since parting day,
Yon untrimmed lamp, whose yellow gleam
Is mingling with the cold moon-beam,
And yon thin form! — the hectic red
On his pale cheek unequal spread;

The head reclined, the loosened hair,
The limbs relaxed, the mournful air. —
See, he looks up; — a woeful smile
Lightens his woe-worn cheek a while, —
'Tis fancy wakes some idle thought,
To gild the ruin she has wrought;
For, like the bat of Indian brakes,
Her pinions fan the wound she makes,
And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
She drinks his life-blood from the vein.
Now to the lattice turn his eyes,
Vain hope! to see the sun arise.
The moon with clouds is still o'ercast,
Still howls by fits the stormy blast;
Another hour must wear away
Ere the East kindle into day,
And hark! to waste that weary hour,
He tries the minstrel's magic power,

XXXIII.

S O N G.

TO THE MOON.

Hail, to thy cold and clouded beam,
Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky!
Hail, though the mists that o'er thee stream
Lend to thy brow their sullen dye!

How should thy pure and peaceful eye
Untroubled view our scenes below,
Or how a tearless beam supply
To light a world of war and woe!

Fair Queen! I will not blame thee now,
As once by Greta's fairy side;
Each little cloud that dimmed thy brow
Did then an angel's beauty hide.
And of the shades I then could chide,
Still are the thoughts to memory dear,
For, while a softer strain I tried,
They hid my blush, and calmed my fear.

Then did I swear thy ray serene
Was formed to light some lonely dell,
By two fond lovers only seen,
Reflected from the crystal well,
Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
Or quivering on the lattice bright,
Or glancing on their couch, to tell
How swiftly wanes the summer night!

XXXIV.

He starts — a step at this lone hour!
A voice! — his father seeks the tower,
With haggard look and troubled sense,
Fresh from his dreadful conference.

„Wilfrid! — what, not to sleep addressed?
Thou hast no cares to chase thy rest.
Mortham has fallen on Marston-moor;
Bertram brings warrant to secure
His treasures, bought by spoil and blood,
For the state's use and public good.
The menials will thy voice obey;
Let his commission have its way,
In every point, in every word,” —
Then, in a whisper, — „Take thy sword!
Bertram is — what I must not tell.
I hear his hasty step — farewell!”

END OF CANTO FIRST.

R O K E B Y.

CANTO SECOND.

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R O K E B Y.

## CANTO SECOND.

## I.

FAR in the chambers of the west,  
The gale had sighed itself to rest;  
The moon was cloudless now and clear,  
But pale, and soon to disappear.  
The thin grey clouds wax dimly light  
On Brusleton and Houghton height;  
And the rich dale, that eastward lay,  
Waited the wakening touch of day,  
To give its woods and cultured plain,  
And towers and spires to light again.  
But, westward, Stanmore's shapeless swell,  
And Lunedale wild, and Kelton-fell,  
And rock-begirdled Gilmanscar,  
And Arkingarth, lay dark afar;  
While, as a livelier twilight falls,  
Emerge proud Barnard's banner'd walls.



High crowned he sits, in dawning pale,  
The sovereign of the lovely vale.

## II.

What prospects, from his watch-tower high,  
Gleam gradual on the warder's eye! —  
Far sweeping to the east, he sees  
Down his deep woods the course of Tees,  
And tracks his wanderings by the steam  
Of summer vapours from the stream;  
And ere he pace his destined hour  
By Brackenbury's dungeon-tower,  
These silver mists shall melt away,  
And dew the woods with glittering spray.  
Then in broad lustre shall be shewn  
That mighty trench of living stone,  
And each huge trunk that, from the side,  
Reclines him o'er the darksome tide,  
Where Tees, full many a fathom low,  
Wears with his rage no common foe;  
For pebbly-banks, nor sand-bed here,  
Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce career,  
Condemned to mine a channell'd way,  
O'er solid sheets of marble grey.

## III.

Nor Tees alone, in dawning bright,  
Shall rush upon the ravish'd sight;



But many a tributary stream  
Each from its own dark dell shall gleam:  
Staindrop, who, from her sylvan bowers,  
Salutes proud Raby's battled towers;  
The rural brook of Eglistone,  
And Balder, named from Odin's son;  
And Greta, to whose banks ere long  
We lead the lovers of the song;  
And silver Lune, from Stanmore wild,  
And fairy Thorsgill's murmuring child,  
And last and least, but loveliest still,  
Romantic Deepdale's slender rill.  
Who in that dim-wood glen hath strayed,  
Yet longed for Roslin's magic glade?  
Who, wandering there, hath sought to change  
Even for that vale so stern and strange,  
Where Cartland's crags, fantastic rent,  
Through her green copse like spires are sent?  
Yet, Albin, yet the praise be thine,  
Thy scenes and story to combine!  
Thou bid'st him, who by Roslin strays,  
List to the deeds of other days;  
'Mid Cartland's crags thou showest the cave,  
The refuge of thy champion brave;  
Giving each rock its storied tale,  
Pouring a lay for every dale,  
Knitting, as with a moral band,  
Thy native legends with thy land,



To lend each scene the interest high  
Which genius beams from Beauty's eye.

## IV.

Bertram awaited not the sight  
Which sun-rise shews from Barnard's height,  
But from the towers, preventing day,  
With Wilfrid took his early way,  
While misty dawn, and moon-beam pale,  
Still mingled in the silent dale  
By Barnard's bridge of stately stone,  
The southern bank of Tees they won;  
Their winding path then eastward cast,  
And Eglistone's grey ruins past;  
Each on his own deep visions bent,  
Silent and sad they onward went.  
Well may you think that Bertram's mood  
To Wilfrid savage seemed and rude;  
Well may you think bold Risingham  
Held Wilfrid trivial, poor, and tame;  
And small the intercourse, I ween,  
Such uncongenial souls between.

## V.

Stern Bertram shunned the nearer way,  
Through Rokeby's park and chase that lay,  
And, skirting high the valley's ridge,



They crossed by Greta's ancient bridge,  
 Descending where her waters wind  
 Free for a space and unconfined,  
 As, 'scaped from Brignal's dark wood glen,  
 She seeks wild Mortham's deeper den.  
 There, as his eye glanced o'er the mound,  
 Raised by that Legion long renowned,  
 Whose votive shrine asserts their claim,  
 Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,  
 "Stern sons of war!" sad Wilfrid sigh'd,  
 "Behold the boast of Roman pride!  
 What now of all your toils are known?  
 A grassy trench, a broken stone!" —  
 This to himself; for moral strain  
 To Bertram were addressed in vain.

## VI.

Of different mood, a deeper sigh  
 Awoke, when Rokeby's turrets high  
 Were northward in the dawning seen  
 To rear them o'er the thicket green.  
 O then, though Spenser's self had strayed  
 Beside him through the lovely glade,  
 Lending his rich luxuriant glow  
 Of fancy, all its charms to show,  
 Pointing the stream rejoicing free,  
 As captive set at liberty,  
 Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,



And clamouring joyful on her road;  
Pointing where, up the sunny banks,  
The trees retire in scattered ranks,  
Save where, advanced before the rest,  
On knoll or hillock rears his crest,  
Lonely and huge, the giant Oak,  
As champions, when their band is broke,  
Stand forth to guard the rearward post,  
The bulwark of the scattered host —  
All this, and more, might Spenser say,  
Yet waste in vain his magic lay,  
While Wilfrid eyed the distant tower,  
Whose lattice lights Matilda's bower.

## VII.

The open vale is soon past o'er,  
Rokeby, though nigh, is seen no more;  
Sinking mid Greta's thickets deep,  
A wild and darker course they keep,  
A stern and lone, yet lovely road,  
As e'er the foot of Minstrel trode!  
Broad shadows o'er their passage fell,  
Deeper and narrower grew the dell;  
It seemed some mountain, rent and riven,  
A channel for the stream had given,  
So high the cliffs of limestone grey  
Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,  
Yielding, along their rugged base,



A flinty footpath's niggard space,  
Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,  
May hear the headlong torrent rave,  
And like a steed in frantic fit,  
That flings the froth from curb and bit,  
May view her chafe her waves to spray,  
O'er every rock that bars her way,  
Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,  
Thick as the schemes of human pride,  
That down life's current drive amain,  
As frail, as frothy, and as vain!

## VIII.

The cliffs, that rear the haughty head  
High o'er the river's darksome bed,  
Were now all naked, wild, and grey,  
Now waving all with greenwood spray;  
Here trees to every crevice clung,  
And o'er the dell their branches hung;  
And there, all splintered and uneven,  
The shivered rocks ascend to heaven;  
Oft, too, the ivy swathed their breast,  
And wreathed its garland round their crest,  
Or from the spires bade loosely flare  
Its tendrils in the middle air.  
As pennons wont to wave of old  
O'er the high feast of Baron bold,  
When revelled loud the feudal rout,



And the arched halls returned their shout,  
Such and more wild is Greta's roar,  
And such the echoes from her shore,  
And so the ivied banners gleam,  
Waved wildly o'er the brawling stream.

## IX.

Now from the stream the rocks recede,  
But leave between no sunny mead,  
No, nor the spot of pebbly sand,  
Oft found by such a mountain strand,  
Forming such warm and dry retreat,  
As fancy deems the lonely seat,  
Where hermit, wandering from his cell,  
His rosary might love to tell.  
But here, 'twixt rock and river grew  
A dismal grove of sable yew,  
With whose sad tints were mingled seen  
The blighted fir's sepulchral green.  
Seemed that the trees their shadows cast  
The earth that nourished them to blast,  
For never knew that swarthy grove  
The verdant hue that fairies love;  
Nor wilding green, nor woodland flower,  
Arose within its baleful bower;  
The dank and sable earth receives  
Its only carpet from the leaves,  
That, from the withering branches cast,



Bestrewed the ground with every blast.  
Though now the sun was o'er the hill,  
In this dark spot 'twas twilight still,  
Save that on Greta's farther side  
Some straggling beams through copse-wood glide.  
And wild and savage contrast made  
That dingle's deep and funeral shade,  
With the bright tints of early day,  
Which, glimmering through the ivy spray,  
On the opposing summit lay.

## X.

The lated peasant shunned the dell,  
For Superstition wont to tell  
Of many a grisly sound and sight,  
Scaring its path at dead of night.  
When Christmas logs blaze high and wide,  
Such wonders speed the festal tide,  
While Curiosity and Fear,  
Pleasure and Pain, sit crouching near,  
Till childhood's cheek no longer glows,  
And village maidens lose the rose.  
The thrilling interest rises higher,  
The circle closes nigh and nigher,  
And shuddering glance is cast behind,  
As louder moans the wintry wind.  
Believe, that fitting scene was laid  
For such wild tales in Mortham glade;  
For who had seen on Greta's side,



By that dim light, fierce Bertram stride,  
In such a spot, at such an hour, —  
If touched by Superstition's power,  
Might well have deemed that Hell had given  
A murderer's ghost to upper heaven,  
While Wilfrid's form had seemed to glide  
Like his pale victim by his side.

## XI.

Nor think to village swains alone  
Are these unearthly terrors known;  
For not to rank nor sex confined  
Is this vain ague of the mind.  
Hearts firm as steel, as marble hard,  
'Gainst faith, and love, and pity barred,  
Have quaked like aspen leaves in May,  
Beneath its universal sway.  
Bertram had listed many a tale  
Of wonder in his native dale,  
That in his secret soul retained  
The credence they in childhood gained;  
Nor less his wild adventurous youth  
Believed in every legend's truth,  
Learned when beneath the tropic gale  
Full swelled the vessel's steady sail,  
And the broad Indian moon her light  
Poured on the watch of middle night,  
When seamen love to hear and tell  
Of portent, prodigy, and spell:



What gales are sold on Lapland's shore,  
How whistle rash bids tempests roar,  
Of witch, of mermaid, and of sprite,  
Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light;  
Or of that Phantom Ship, whose form  
Shoots like a meteor through the storm,  
When the dark scud comes driving hard,  
And lowered is every topsail yard,  
And canvass, wove in earthly looms,  
No more to brave the storm presumes!  
Then, 'mid the war of sea and sky,  
Top and top-gallant hoisted high,  
Full-spread and crowded every sail,  
The Dæmon-frigate braves the gale;  
An well the doomed, spectators know  
The harbinger of wreck and woe.

## XII.

Then too were told, in stifled tone,  
Marvels and omens all their own;  
How, by some desert isle or key,  
Where Spaniards wrought their cruelty,  
Or where the savage pirate's mood  
Repaid it home in deeds of blood,  
Strange nightly sounds of woe and fear  
Appalled the listening buccaneer,  
Whose light-armed shallop anchored lay  
In ambush by the lonely bay.  
The groan of grief, the shriek of pain,



Ring from the moon-light groves of cane;  
The fierce adventurer's heart they scare,  
Who wearies memory for a prayer,  
Curses the road-stead, and with gale  
Of early morning lifts the sail,  
To give, in thirst of blood and prey,  
A legend for another bay.

## XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child,  
Trained in the mystic and the wild,  
With this on Bertram's soul at times  
Rushed a dark feeling of his crimes;  
Such to his troubled soul their form,  
As the pale Death-ship to the storm,  
And such their omen dim and dread,  
As shrieks and voices of the dead.  
That pang, whose transitory force  
Hovered 'twixt horror and remorse;  
That pang, perchance, his bosom pressed,  
As Wilfrid sudden he addressed.  
„Wilfrid, this glen is never trod  
Until the sun rides high abroad,  
Yet twice have I beheld to-day  
A Form that seemed to dog our way;  
Twice from my glance it seemed to flee,  
And shroud itself by cliff or tree.  
How think'st thou? — is our path way-laid,  
Or hath thy sire my trust betrayed?



If so" — Ere, starting from his dream,  
That turned upon a gentler theme,  
Wilfrid had roused him to reply,  
Bertram sprung forward, shouting high,  
"Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt stand!"  
And forth he darted, sword in hand.

## XIV.

As bursts the levin in its wrath,  
He shot him down the sounding path;  
Rock, wood, and stream, rang wildly out,  
To his loud step and savage shout.  
Seems that the object of his race  
Hath scaled the cliffs; his frantic chase  
Sidelong he turns, and now 'tis bent  
Right up the rock's tall battlement;  
Straining each sinew to ascend,  
Foot, hand, and knee, their aid must lend.  
Wilfrid, all dizzy with dismay,  
Views from beneath his dreadful way;  
Now to the oak's warped roots he clings,  
Now trusts his weight to ivy strings;  
Now, like the wild goat, must he dare  
An unsupported leap in air; —  
Hid in the shrubby rain-course now,  
You mark him by the crashing bough,  
And by his corslet's sullen clank,  
And by the stones spurned from the bank,  
And by the hawk scared from her nest,



And ravens croaking o'er their guest,  
Who deem his forfeit limbs shall pay  
The tribute of his bold essay.

## XV

See, he emerges! — desperate now  
All farther course — yon beetling brow,  
In craggy nakedness sublime,  
What heart or foot shall dare to climb?  
It bears no tendril for his clasp,  
Presents no angle to his grasp;  
Sole stay his foot may rest upon,  
Is yon earth-bedded jetting stone.  
Balanced on such precarious prop,  
He strains his grasp to reach the top.  
Just as the dangerous stretch he makes,  
By heaven, his faithless footstool shakes!  
Beneath his tottering bulk it bends,  
It sways, . . . it loosens, . . . it descends!  
And downward holds its headlong way,  
Crashing o'er rock and copse-wood spray.  
Loud thunders shake the echoing dell! —  
Fell it alone? — alone it fell.  
Just on the very verge of fate,  
The hardy Bertram's falling weight  
He trusted to his sinewy hands,  
And on the top unharmed he stands!



## XVI.

Wilfrid a safer path pursued,  
At intervals where, roughly hewed,  
Rude steps ascending from the dell  
Rendered the cliffs accessible.  
By circuit slow he thus attained  
The height that Risingham had gained,  
And when he issued from the wood,  
Before the gate of Mortham stood.  
'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay  
On battled tower and portal grey,  
And from the grassy slope he sees  
The Greta flow to meet the Tees,  
Where, issuing from her darksome bed,  
She caught the morning's eastern red,  
And through the softening vale below  
Rolled her bright waves in rosy glow,  
All blushing to her bridal bed,  
Like some shy maid in convent bred,  
While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay,  
Sing forth her nuptial roundelay.

## XVII.

'Twas sweetly sung that roundelay,  
That summer morn shone blithe and gray;  
But morning beam, and wild bird's call,  
Awaked not Mortham's silent hall.  
No porter, by the low-brow'd gate,



Took in the wonted nitch his seat;  
To the paved court no peasant drew,  
Waked to their toil no menial crew,  
The maiden's carol was not heard,  
As to her morning task she fared;  
In the void offices around,  
Rung not a hoof, nor bayed a hound;  
Nor eager steed, with shrilling neigh,  
Accused the lagging groom's delay;  
Untrimmed, undressed neglected now,  
Was alley'd walk and orchard bough;  
All spoke the master's absent care,  
All spoke neglect and disrepair.  
South of the gate an arrow-flight,  
Two mighty elms their limbs unite,  
As if a canopy to spread  
O'er the lone dwelling of the dead;  
For their huge boughs in arches bent  
Above a massive monument,  
Carved o'er in ancient Gothic wise,  
With many a scutcheon and device:  
There, spent with toil and sunk in gloom,  
Bertram stood pondering by the tomb.

## XVIII.

«It vanished, like a flitting ghost!  
Behind this tomb,» he said, «'twas lost —  
This tomb, where oft I deemed, lies stored  
Of Mortham's Indian wealth the hoard.  
Tis true, the aged servants said



Here his lamented wife is laid;  
But weightier reasons may be guessed  
For their lord's strict and stern behest,  
That none should on his steps intrude,  
Whene'er he sought this solitude. —  
An ancient mariner I knew,  
What time I sailed with Morgan's crew,  
Who oft, 'mid our carousals, spake  
Of Raleigh, Forbisher, and Drake;  
Adventurous hearts, who bartered bold  
Their English steel for Spanish gold.  
Trust not, would his experience say,  
Captain or comrade with your prey;  
But seek some charnel, when, at full,  
The moon gilds skeleton and skull.  
There dig and tomb your precious heap,  
And bid the dead your treasure keep;  
Sure stewards they, if fitting spell  
Their service to the task compel.  
Lacks there such charnel? — kill a slave,  
Or prisoner, on the treasure-grave;  
And bid his discontented ghost  
Stalk nightly on his lonely post. —  
Such was his tale. Its truth, I ween,  
Is in my morning vision seen." —

## XIX.

Wilfrid, who scorned the legend wild,  
In mingled mirth and pity smiled,



Much marvelling that a breast so bold  
 In such fond tale belief should hold;  
 But yet of Bertram sought to know  
 The apparition's form and show. —  
 The power within the guilty breast,  
 Oft vanquished, never quite suppressed,  
 That unsubdued and lurking lies  
 To take the felon by surprise,  
 And force him, as by magic spell,  
 In his despite his guilt to tell, —  
 That power in Bertram's breast awoke;  
 Scarce conscious he was heard, he spoke;  
 «'Twas Mortham's form, from foot to head!  
 His morion with the plume of red,  
 His shape, his mien — 'twas Mortham right,  
 As when I slew him in the fight.» —  
 — «Thou slay him? — thou?» — With conscious  
 start

He heard, then manned his haughty heart. —  
 — «I slew him? — I! — I had forgot,  
 Thou, stripling, knewest not of the plot.  
 But it is spoken — nor will I  
 Deed done, or spoken word, deny.  
 I slew him, I! for thankless pride;  
 'Twas by this hand that Mortham died.» —

## XX.

Wilfrid, of gentle hand and heart,  
 Averse to every active part,



But most averse to martial broil,  
From danger shrunk, and turned from toil;  
Yet the meek lover of the lyre  
Nursed one brave spark of noble fire;  
Against injustice, fraud, or wrong,  
His blood beat high, his hand waxed strong.  
Not his the nerves that could sustain,  
Unshaken, danger, toil, and pain;  
But when that spark blazed forth to flame,  
He rose superior to his frame.  
And now it came, that generous mood;  
And, in full current of his blood!  
On Bertram he laid desperate hand,  
Placed firm his foot, and drew his brand.  
"Should every fiend to whom thou'rt sold,  
Rise in thine aid, I keep my hold. —  
Arouse there, ho! take spear and sword!  
Attach the murderer of your Lord!" —

## XXI.

A moment, fixed as by a spell,  
Stood Bertram — it seemed miracle,  
That one so feeble, soft, and tame,  
Set grasp on warlike Risingham.  
But when he felt a feeble stroke,  
The fiend within the ruffian woke!  
To wrench the sword from Wilfrid's hand,  
To dash him headlong on the sand,  
Was but one moment's work, — one more



Had drenched the blade in Wilfrid's gore;  
But, in the instant it arose,  
To end his life, his love, his woes,  
A warlike Form, that marked the scene,  
Presents his rapier sheathed between,  
Parries the fast-descending blow,  
And steps 'twixt Wilfrid and his foe;  
Nor then unscabbarded his brand,  
But, sternly pointing with his hand,  
With monarch's voice forbade the fight,  
And motioned Bertram from his sight.  
"Go, and repent," — he said, "while time  
Is given thee; add not crime to crime." —

## XXII.

Mute and uncertain and amazed,  
As on a vision Bertram gazed!  
'Twas Mortham's bearing bold and high,  
His sinewy frame, his falcon eye,  
His look and accent of command,  
The martial gesture of his hand,  
His stately form, spare-built and tall,  
His war-bleached locks — 'twas Mortham all.  
Through Bertram's dizzy brain career  
A thousand thoughts, and all of fear;  
His wavering faith received not quite  
The form he saw as Mortham's sprite,  
But more he feared it, if it stood  
His lord, in living flesh and blood —



What spectre can the charnel send,  
 So dreadful as an injured friend?  
 Then, too, the habit of command,  
 Used by the leader of the band,  
 When Risingham, for many a day,  
 Had marched and fought beneath his sway,  
 Tamed him — and, with reverted face,  
 Backwards he bore his sullen pace,  
 Oft stopped, and oft on Mortham stared,  
 And dark as rated mastiff glared;  
 But when the tramp of steeds was heard,  
 Plunged in the glen, and disappeared.  
 Nor longer there the Warrior stood,  
 Retiring eastward through the wood;  
 But first to Wilfrid warning gives,  
 "Tell thou to none that Mortham lives." —

## XXIII.

Still rung these words in Wilfrid's ear,  
 Hinting he knew not what of fear,  
 When nearer came the coursers' tread,  
 And, with his father at their head,  
 Of horsemen armed a gallant power  
 Reined up their steeds before the tower.  
 "Whence these pale looks, my son?" he said:  
 "Where's Bertram? why that naked blade?" —  
 Wilfrid ambiguously replied,  
 (For Mortham's charge his honour tied)  
 "Bertram is gone — the villain's word



Avouched him murderer of his lord!  
Even now we fought — but, when your tread  
Announced you nigh, the felon fled." —  
In Wycliffe's conscious eye appear  
A guilty hope, a guilty fear;  
On his pale brow the dew-drop broke,  
And his lip quivered as he spoke.

## XXIV.

"A murderer! — Philip Mortham died  
Amid the battle's wildest tide.  
Wilfrid, or Bertram raves, or you!  
Yet grant such strange confession true,  
Pursuit were vein — let him fly far —  
Justice must sleep in civil war." —  
A gallant Youth rode near his side,  
Brave Rokeby's page, in battle tried;  
That morn, an embassy of weight  
He brought to Barnard's castle gate,  
And followed now in Wycliffe's train,  
An answer for his lord to gain.  
His steed, whose arched and sable neck  
An hundred wreaths of foam bedeck,  
Chafed not against the curb more high  
Than he at Oswald's cold reply;  
He bit his lip, implored his saint,  
(His the old faith) — then burst restraint.



## XXV.

“Yes! I beheld his bloody fall,  
By that base traitor’s dastard ball,  
Just when I thought to measure sword,  
Presumptuous hope! with Mortham’s lord.  
And shall the murderer ’scape, who slew  
His leader generous, brave, and true?  
Escape! while on the dew you trace  
The marks of his gigantic pace?  
No! ere the sun that dew shall dry,  
False Risingham shall yield or die. —  
Ring out the castle larum bell!  
Arouse the peasants with the knell!  
Meantime, disperse — ride, gallants, ride!  
Beset the wood on every side.  
But if among you one there be,  
That honours Mortham’s memory,  
Let him dismount and follow me!  
Else on your crests sit fear and shame,  
And foul suspicion dog your name!” —

## XXVI.

Instant to earth young REDMOND sprung;  
Instant on earth the harness rung  
Of twenty men of Wycliffe’s band,  
Who waited not their lord’s command.  
Redmond his spurs from buskins drew,  
His mantle from his shoulders threw,



His pistols in his belt he placed,  
The green-wood gained, the footsteps traced,  
Shouted like huntsman to his hounds,  
"To cover, hark!" — and in he bounds.  
Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry,  
"Suspicion! yes — pursue him — fly —  
But venture not, in useless strife,  
On ruffian desperate of his life.  
Whoever finds him, shoot him dead!  
Five hundred nobles for his head!" —

## XXVII.

The horsemen galloped, to make good  
Each pass that issued from the wood.  
Loud from the thickets rung the shout  
Of Redmond and his eager route;  
With them was Wilfrid, stung with ire,  
And envying Redmond's martial fire,  
And emulous of fame. — But where  
Is Oswald, noble Mortham's heir?  
He, bound by honour, law, and faith,  
Avenger of his kinsman's death? —  
Leaning against the elmin tree,  
With drooping head and slackened knee,  
And clenched teeth, and close-clasped hands,  
In agony of soul he stands!  
His downcast eye on earth is bent,  
His soul to every sound is lent,



For in each shout that cleaves the air,  
Nay ring discovery and despair.

## XXVIII.

What 'vailed it him, that brightly played  
The morning sun on Mortham's glade?  
All seems in giddy round to ride,  
Like objects on a stormy tide,  
Seen eddying by the moon-light dim,  
Imperfectly to sink and swim.  
What 'vailed it, that the fair domain,  
Its battled mansion, hill, and plain,  
On which the sun so brightly shone,  
Envied so long, was now his own?  
The lowest dungeon, in that hour,  
Of Brackenbury's dismal tower,  
Had been his choice, could such a doom  
Have opened Mortham's bloody tomb!  
Forced, too, to turn unwilling ear  
To each surmise of hope or fear,  
Murmured among the rustics round,  
Who gathered at the larum sound,  
He dare not turn his head away,  
Even to look up to heaven to pray,  
Or call on hell, in bitter mood,  
For one sharp death-shot from the wood!

## XXIX.

At length o'erpast that dreadful space,  
Back straggling came the scattered chase;



Jaded and weary, horse and man,  
Returned the troopers, one by one.  
Wilfrid, the last, arrived to say,  
All trace was lost of Bertram's way,  
Though Redmond still, up Brignal wood,  
The hopeless quest in vain pursued. —  
O fatal doom of human race!  
What tyrant passions passions chase,  
Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone,  
Avarice and pride resume their throne;  
The pang of instant terror by,  
They dictate thus their slave's reply.

## XXX.

«Ay — let him range like hasty hound,  
And if the grim wolf's lair be found,  
Small is my care how goes the game  
With Redmond or with Risingham. —  
Nay, answer not, thou simple boy!  
Thy fair Matilda, all so coy  
To thee, is of another mood  
To that bold youth of Erin's blood.  
Thy ditties will she freely praise,  
And pay thy pains with courtly phrase;  
In a rough path will oft command —  
Accept at least — thy friendly hand;  
His she avoids, or, urged and prayed,  
Unwilling takes his proffered aid,



While conscious passion plainly speaks  
In downcast look and blushing cheeks.  
Whene'er he sings will she glide nigh,  
And all her soul is in her eye,  
Yet doubts she still to tender free  
The wonted words of courtesy.  
These are strong signs! — yet wherefore sigh,  
And wipe, effeminate, thine eye?  
Thine shall she be, if thou attend  
The counsels of thy sire and friend.

## XXXI.

„Scarce wert thou gone, when peep of light  
Brought genuine news of Marston's fight.  
Brave Cromwell turned the doubtful tide,  
And conquest blessed the rightful side;  
Three thousand cavaliers lie dead,  
Rupert and that bold Marquis fled;  
Nobles and knights, so proud of late,  
Must fine for freedom and estate.  
Of these committed to my charge,  
Is Rokeby, prisoner at large;  
Redmond, his page, arrived to say  
He reaches Barnard's towers to-day.  
Right heavy shall his ransom be,  
Unless that maid compound with thee!  
Go to her now — be bold of cheer,  
While her soul floats 'twix hope and fear:



It is the very change of tide,  
When best the female heart is tried —  
Pride, prejudice, and modesty,  
Are in the current swept to sea,  
And the bold swain, who plies his oar,  
May lightly row his bark to shore.\*

END OF CANTO SECOND.



# R O K E B Y.

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## C A N T O T H I R D.



ROKBY.

TO THE THIRD



# ROKBY.

## CANTO THIRD.

### I.

THE hunting tribes of air and earth  
 Respect the brethren of their birth;  
 Nature, who loves the claim of kind,  
 Less cruel chase to each assigned.  
 The falcon, poised on soaring wing,  
 Watches the wild-duck by the spring;  
 The slow-hound wakes the fox's lair,  
 The greyhound presses on the hare,  
 The eagle pounces on the lamb,  
 The wolf devours the fleecy dam;  
 Even tyger fell, and sullen bear,  
 Their likeness and their lineage spare.  
 Man, only, mars kind Nature's plan,  
 And turns the fierce pursuit on man;



Plying war's desultory trade,  
Incurston, flight, and ambuscade,  
Since Nimrod, Cush's mighty son,  
At first the bloody game begun.

## II.

The Indian, prowling for his prey,  
Who hears the settlers track his way,  
And knows in distant forest far  
Camp his red brethren of the war;  
He, when each double and disguise  
To baffle the pursuit he tries,  
Low crouching now his head to hide,  
Where swampy streams through rushes glide,  
Now covering with the withered leaves  
The foot-prints that the dew receives;  
He, skilled in every sylvan guile,  
Knows not, nor tries, such various wile,  
As Risingham, when on the wind  
Arose the loud pursuit behind.  
In Redesdale his youth had heard  
Each art her wily dalesmen dared,  
When Rookan-edge, and Redswair high,  
To bugle rung and blood-hound's cry,  
Announcing Jedwood-axe and spear,  
And Lid'sdale riders in the rear;  
And well his venturous life had proved  
he lessons that his childhood loved.



## III.

Oft had he shewn, in climes afar,  
Each attribute of roving war;  
The sharpened ear, the piercing eye,  
The quick resolve in danger nigh;  
The speed, that, in the flight or chase,  
Outstripped the Charibes rapid race;  
The steady brain, the sinewy limb,  
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim;  
The iron frame, inured to bear  
Each dire inclemency of air,  
Nor less confirmed to undergo  
Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throe.  
These arts he proved, his life to save,  
In peril oft by land and wave,  
On Arawaca's desert shore,  
Or where La Plata's billows roar,  
When oft the sons of vengeful Spain  
Tracked the marauder's steps in vain.  
These arts, in Indian warfare tried,  
Must save him now by Greta's side.

## IV.

'Twas then, in hour of utmost need,  
He proved his courage, art, and speed.  
Now slow he stalk'd with stealthy pace,



Now started forth in rapid race,  
Oft doubling back in mazy train,  
To blind the trace the dew's retain;  
Now clombe the rocks projecting high,  
To baffle the pursuer's eye,  
Now sought the stream, whose brawling sound  
The echo of his footsteps drowned.  
But if the forest verge he nears,  
There trample steeds and glimmer spears;  
If deeper down the copse he drew,  
He heard the rangers' loud halloo,  
Beating each cover while they came,  
As if to start the sylvan game.  
'Twas then — like tyger close beset  
At every pass with toil and net,  
Countered, where'er he turns his glare,  
By clashing arms and torches' flare,  
Who meditates, with furious bound,  
To burst on hunter, horse, and hound, —  
'Twas then that Bertram's soul arose,  
Prompting to rush upon his foes:  
But as that crouching tyger, cow'd  
By brandish'd steel and shouting cow'd  
Retreats beneath the jungle's shroud,  
Bertram suspends his purpose stern,  
'And couches in the brake and fern,  
Hiding his face, lest foemen spy  
The sparkle of his swarthy eye.



## V.

Then Bertram might the bearing trace  
Of the bold youth who led the chase,  
Who paused to list for every sound,  
Climbed every height to look around,  
Then rushing on with naked sword,  
Each dingle's bosky depths explored.  
'Twas Redmond — by the azure eye;  
'Twas Redmond — by the locks that fly  
Disordered from his glowing cheek;  
Mien, face, and form, young Redmond speak.  
A form more active, light, and strong,  
Ne'er shot the ranks of war along;  
The modest, yet the manly mien,  
Might grace the court of maiden queen;  
A face more fair you well might find,  
For Redmond's knew the sun and wind;  
Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,  
The charm of regularity;  
But every feature had the power  
To aid the expression of the hour:  
Whether gay wit, and humour sly,  
Danced laughing in his light-blue eye;  
Or bended brow, and glance of fire,  
And kindling cheek, spoke Erin's ire;  
Or soft and saddened glances show  
Her ready sympathy with woe;  
Or in that wayward mood of mind,



When various feelings are combined,  
When joy and sorrow mingle near,  
And hope's bright wings are checked by fear  
And rising doubts keep transport down,  
And anger lends a short-lived frown;  
In that strange mood which maids approve,  
Even when they dare not call it love,  
With every change his features played,  
As aspens shew the light and shade.

## VI.

Well Risingham young Redmond knew;  
And much he marvelled that the crew,  
Roused to revenge bold Mortham dead,  
Were by that Mortham's foeman led;  
For never felt his soul the woe,  
That wails a generous foeman low,  
Far less that sense of justice strong,  
That wreaks a generous foeman's wrong.  
But small his leisure now to pause;  
Redmond is first, whate'er the cause:  
And twice that Redmond came so near,  
Where Bertram couched like hunted deer,  
The very boughs his steps displace,  
Rustled against the ruffian's face,  
Who, desperate, twice prepared to start,  
And plunge his dagger in his heart!  
But Redmond turned a different way,



And the bent boughs resumed their sway,  
And Bertram held it wise, unseen,  
Deeper to plunge in coppice green.  
Thus, circled in his coil, the snake,  
When roving hunters beat the brake,  
Watches with red and glistening eye,  
Prepared, if heedless step draw nigh,  
With forked tongue and venom'd fang  
Instant to dart the deadly pang;  
But if the intruders turn aside,  
Away his coils unfolded glide,  
And through the deep savannah wind,  
Some undisturbed retreat to find.

## VII.

But Bertram, as he backward drew,  
And heard the loud pursuit renew,  
And Redmond's hollo on the wind,  
Oft muttered in his savage mind —  
"Redmond O'Neale! were thou and I  
Alone this day's event to try,  
With not a second here to see,  
But the grey cliff and oaken-tree, —  
That voice of thine, that shouts so loud,  
Should ne'er repeat its summons proud!  
No! nor e'er try its melting power  
Again in maiden's summer bower." —  
Eluded, now behind him die,

## XVII.

## F



Faint and more faint, each hostile cry;  
He stands in Scargill wood alone,  
Nor hears he now a harsher tone  
Than the hoarse cushat's plaintive cry,  
Or Greta's sound that murmurs by;  
And on the dale, so lone and wild,  
The summer sun in quiet smiled.

## VIII.

He listen'd long with anxious heart,  
Ear bent to hear, and foot to start,  
And, while his stretch'd attention glows,  
Refused his weary frame repose.  
'Twas silence all — he laid him down,  
Where purple heath profusely strown,  
And throatwort with its azure bell,  
And moss and thyme his cushion swell.  
There, spent with toil, he listless eyed  
The course of Greta's playful tide,  
Beneath her banks now eddying dun,  
Now brightly gleaming to the sun,  
As, dancing over rock and stone,  
In yellow light her currents shone,  
Matching in hue the favourite gem  
Of Albin's mountain-diadem.  
Then, tired to watch the current's play,  
He turned his weary eyes away,  
To where the bank opposing shewed



Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy wood.  
One, prominent above the rest,  
Reared to the sun its pale grey breast;  
Around its broken summit grew  
The hazel rude, and sable yew;  
A thousand varied lichens dyed  
Its waste and weather-beaten side,  
And round its rugged basis lay,  
By time or thunder rent away,  
Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,  
Were mantled now by verdant thorn.  
Such was the scene's wild majesty,  
That filled stern Bertram's gazing eye.

## IX.

In sullen mood he lay reclined,  
Revolving, in his stormy mind,  
The felon deed, the fruitless guilt,  
His patron's blood by treason spilt;  
A crime, it seemed, so dire and dread,  
That it had power to wake the dead.  
Then pondering on his life betrayed  
By Oswald's art to Redmond's blade,  
In treacherous purpose to withhold,  
So seem'd it, Mortham's promised gold,  
A deep and full revenge he vowed  
On Redmond, forward, fierce, and proud;  
Revenge on Wilfrid — on his sire



Redoubled vengeance, swift and dire! —  
If, in such mood, (as legends say,  
And well believed that simple day,)  
The Enemy of Man has power  
To profit by the evil hour,  
Here stood a wretch, prepared to change  
His soul's redemption for revenge!  
But, though his vows, with such a fire  
Of earnest and intense desire  
For vengeance dark and fell, were made,  
As well might reach hell's lowest shade,  
No deeper clouds the grove embrowned,  
No nether thunders shook the ground;  
The dæmon knew his vassal's heart,  
And spared temptation's needless art.

## X.

Of, mingled with the direful theme,  
Came Mortham's form — was it a dream?  
Or had he seen, in vision true,  
That very Mortham whom he slew?  
Or had in living flesh appeared  
The only man on earth he feared? —  
To try the mystic cause intent,  
His eyes, that on the cliff were bent,  
Countered at once a dazzling glance,  
Like sunbeam flash'd from sword or lance.  
At once he started as for fight,



But not a foeman was in sight;  
He heard the cushat's murmur hoarse,  
He heard the river's sounding course;  
The solitary woodlands lay,  
As slumbering in the summer ray.  
He gazed, like lion roused, around,  
Then sunk again upon the ground.  
'Twas but, he thought, some fitful beam,  
Glanced sudden from the sparkling stream;  
Then plunged him from his gloomy train  
Of ill-connected thoughts again,  
Until a voice behind him cried,  
"Bertram! well met on Greta side" —

## XI.

Instant his sword was in his hand,  
As instant sunk the ready brand;  
Yet, dubious still, opposed he stood  
To him that issued from the wood: —  
"Guy Denzil! — is it thou?" he said;  
"Do we two meet in Scargill shade! —  
Stand back a space! thy purpose show,  
Whether thou comest as friend or foe.  
Report hath said that Denzil's name  
From Rokeby's band was razed with shame." —  
"A shame I owe that hot O'Neale,  
Who told his knight, in peevish zeal,  
Of my marauding on the clowns



Of Calverley and Bradford downs.  
I reckon not. In a war to strive,  
Where, save the leaders, none can thrive,  
Suits ill my mood; and better game  
Awaits us both, if thou art the same  
Unscrupulous, bold Risingham,  
Who watched with me in midnight dark,  
To snatch a deer from Rokeby-park.  
How thinkest thou?" — "Speak thy purpose out;  
I love not mystery or doubt." —

## XXI.

"Then list. — Not far there lurk a crew,  
Of trusty comrades staunch and true  
Gleaned from both factions — Roundheads, freed  
From cant of sermon and of creed;  
And Cavaliers, whose souls, like mine,  
Spurn at the bonds of discipline.  
Wiser, we judge, by dale and wold,  
A warfare of our own to hold,  
Than breathe our last on battle-down,  
For cloak or surplice, mace or crown.  
Our schemes are laid, our purpose set,  
A chief and leader lack we yet. —  
Thou art a wanderer, it is said,  
For Mortham's death thy steps waylaid,  
Thy head at price — so say our spies,  
Who range the valley in disguise.



Join then with us; though wild debate  
And wrangling rend our infant state,  
Each, to an equal loth to bow,  
Will yield to chief renowned as thou." —

## XIII.

"Even now," thought Bertram, "passion-stirred,  
I called on hell, and hell has heard!  
What lack I, vengeance to command,  
But of staunch comrades such a band?  
This Denzil, vowed to every evil,  
Might read a lesson to the devil.  
Well, be it so! each knave and fool  
Shall serve as my revenge's tool." —  
Aloud, "I take thy proffer, Guy,  
But tell me where thy comrades lie?" —  
"Not far from hence," Guy Denzil said,  
"Descend and cross the river's bed,  
Where rises yonder cliff so grey." —  
"Do thou," said Bertram, "lead the way."  
Then muttered, "It is best make sure;  
Guy Denzil's faith was never pure." —  
He followed down the steep descent,  
Then through the Greta's streams they went,  
And, when they reached the farther shore,  
They stood the lonely cliff before.



## XIV.

With wonder Bertram heard within  
The flinty rock a murmured din;  
But when Guy pulled the wilding spray,  
And brambles from its base away,  
He saw, appearing to the air,  
A little entrance low and square,  
Like opening cell of hermit lone,  
Dark winding through the living stone.  
Here entered Denzil, Bertram here,  
And loud and louder on their ear,  
As from the bowels of the earth,  
Resounded shouts of boisterous mirth.  
Of old, the cavern strait and rude  
In slaty rock the peasant hewed;  
And Brignall's woods, and Scargill's, were  
E'en now o'er many a sister cave,  
Where, far within the darksome rift,  
The wedge and lever ply their thrift.  
But war had silenced rural trade,  
And the deserted mine was made  
The banquet-hall, and fortress too,  
Of Denzil and his desperate crew.  
There Guilt his anxious revel kept;  
There on his sordid pallet slept  
Guilt-born Excess, the goblet drained  
Still in his slumbering grasp retained;  
Regret was there, his eye still cast



With vain repining on the past;  
Among the feasters waited near,  
Sorrow, and unrepentant Fear,  
And Blasphemy, to frenzy driven,  
With his own crimes reproaching heaven;  
While Bertram shew'd, amid the crew,  
The Master-Fiend that Milton drew.

## XV.

Hark! the loud revel wakes again,  
To greet the leader of the train.  
Behold the group by the pale lamp,  
That struggles with the earthy damp.  
By what strange features Vice hath known,  
To single out and mark her own!  
Yet some there are, whose brows retain  
Less deeply stamped her brand and stain.  
See yon pale stripling! when a boy,  
A mother's pride, a father's joy!  
Now, 'gainst the vault's rude walls reclined,  
An early image fills his mind:  
The cottage, once his sire's, he sees,  
Embowered upon the banks of Tees;  
He views sweet Winston's woodland scene,  
And shares the dance on Gainford-green.  
A tear is springing — but the zest  
Of some wild tale, or brutal jest,  
Hath to loud laughter stirred the rest.



On him they call, the aptest mate  
 For jovial song and merry feat;  
 Fast flies his dream — with dauntless air,  
 As one victorious o'er despair,  
 He bids the ruddy cup go round,  
 Till sense and sorrow both are drowned,  
 And soon in merry wassail he,  
 The life of all their revelry,  
 Peals his loud song! — The muse has found  
 Her blossoms on the wildest ground,  
 Mid noxious weeds at random strewed,  
 Themselves all profitless and rude. —  
 With desperate merriment he sung,  
 The cavern to the chorus rung;  
 Yet mingled with his reckless glee  
 Remorse's bitter agony.

## XVI.

## SONG.

O Brignal banks are wild and fair,  
 And Greta woods are green,  
 And you may gather garlands there,  
 Would grace a summer queen.  
 And as I rode by Dalton-hall,  
 Beneath the turrets high,  
 A Maiden on the castle wall  
 Was singing merrily, —



## CHORUS.

“O Brignal banks are fresh and fair,  
And Greta woods are green;  
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,  
Than reign our English queen.”

“If, Maiden, thou would'st wend with me,  
To leave both tower and town,  
Thou first must guess what life lead we,  
That dwell by dale and down.  
And if thou canst that riddle read,  
As read full well you may,  
Then to the green wood shalt thou speed,  
As blithe as Queen of May.” —

## CHORUS.

Yet sung she, “Brignal banks are fair,  
And Greta woods are green;  
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,  
Than reign our English queen.”

## XVII.

“I read you, by your bugle-horn,  
And by your palfrey good,  
I read you for a Ranger sworn,  
To keep the king's green wood.” —



«A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,  
And 'tis at peep of light;  
His blast is heard at merry morn,  
And mine at dead of night.» —

## CHORUS.

Yet sung she, «Brignal banks are fair,  
And Greta woods are gay;  
I would I were with Edmund there,  
To reign his Queen of May!

«With burnished brand and musketoon,  
So gallantly you come,  
I read you for a bold dragoon,  
That lists the tuck of drum. —  
«I list no more the tuck of drum,  
No more the trumpet hear;  
But when the beetle sounds his hum,  
My comrades take the spear.

## CHORUS.

«And O! though Brignal banks be fair,  
And Greta woods be gay,  
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,  
Would reign my Queen of May!

## XVIII.

«Maiden! a nameless life I lead,  
A nameless death I'll die;



The fiend, whose lanthorn lights the mead,  
Were better mate than I!  
And when I'm with my comrades met,  
Beneath the greenwood bough,  
What once we were we all forget,  
Nor think what we are now.

## CHORUS.

«Yet Brignal banks are fresh and fair,  
And Greta woods are green,  
And you may gather garlands there,  
Would grace a summer queen.» —

When Edmund ceased his simple song,  
Was silence on the sullen throng,  
Till waked some ruder mate their glee  
With note of coarser minstrelsy.  
But, far apart, in dark divan,  
Denzil and Bertram many a plan,  
Of import foul and fierce, designed,  
While still on Bertram's grasping mind  
The wealth of murdered Mortham hung;  
Though half he feared his daring tongue,  
When it should give his wishes birth,  
Might raise a spectre from the earth!

## XIX.

At length his wondrous tale he told,  
When scornful smiled his comrade bold;



For, trained in license of a court,  
Religion's self was Denzil's sport,  
Then judge in what contempt he held  
The visionary tales of eld!  
His awe for Bertram scarce repressed  
The unbeliever's sneering jest.  
"Twere hard," he said, "for sage or seer  
To spell the subject of your fear;  
Nor do I boast the art renowned,  
Vision and omen to expound.  
Yet, faith if I must needs afford  
To spectre watching treasured hoard,  
As bandog keeps his master's roof,  
Bidding the plunderer stand aloof,  
This doubt remains — thy goblin gaunt  
Hath chosen ill his ghostly haunt;  
For why his guard on Mortham hold,  
When Rokeby castle hath the gold  
Thy patron won on Indian soil,  
By stealth, by piracy, and spoil?" —

## XX.

At this he paused — for angry shame  
Lowered on the brow of Risingham.  
He blushed to think that he should seem  
Assertor of an airy dream,  
And gave his wrath another theme.  
"Denzil," he says, "though lowly laid,



Wrong not the memory of the dead;  
For, while he lived, at Mortham's look  
Thy very soul, Guy Denzil, shook!  
And when he taxed thy breach of word  
To yon fair Rose of Allenford,  
I saw thee crouch like chastened hound,  
Whose back the huntsman's lash hath found.  
Nor dare to call his foreign wealth  
The spoil of piracy or stealth;  
He won it bravely with his brand,  
When Spain waged warfare with our land.  
Mark too — I brook no idle jeer,  
Nor couple Bertram's name with fear;  
Mine is but half the dæmon's lot,  
For I believe, but tremble not. —  
Enough of this. — Say, why this hoard  
Thou deemest at Rokeby castle stored;  
Or think'st that Mortham would bestow  
His treasure with his faction's foe?" —

## XXI.

Soon quenched was Denzil's ill-timed mirth;  
Rather he would have seen the earth  
Give to ten thousand spectres birth,  
Than ventured to awake to flame  
The deadly wrath of Risingham.  
Submiss he answered, — "Mortham's mind,  
Thou knowest, to joy was ill inclined.



In youth, 'tis said, a gallant free,  
A lusty reveller was he;  
But since returned from over sea,  
A sullen and a silent mood  
Hath numbed the current of his blood.  
Hence he refused each kindly call  
To Rokeby's hospitable hall,  
And our stout Knight, at dawn of morn  
Who loved to hear the bugle-horn,  
Nor less, when eve his oaks embrowned,  
To see the ruddy cup go round,  
Took umbrage that a friend so near  
Refused to share his chace and cheer;  
Thus did the kindred barons jar,  
Ere they divided in the war.  
Yet trust me, friend, Matilda fair  
Of Mortham's wealth is destined heir." —

## XXII.

«Destined to her! to yon slight maid!  
The prize my life had well nigh paid,  
When 'gainst Laroche, by Cayo's wave,  
I fought my patron's wealth to save! —  
Denzil, I knew him long, yet ne'er  
Knew him that joyous cavalier,  
Whom youthful friends and early fame  
Called soul of gallantry and game.  
A moody man he sought our crew,



Desperate and dark, whom no one knew;  
And rose, as men with us must rise,  
By scorning life and all its ties.  
On each adventure rash he roved,  
As danger for itself he loved;  
On his sad brow nor mirth nor wine  
Could e'er one wrinkled knot untwine;  
Ill was the omen if he smiled,  
For 'twas in peril stern and wild;  
But when he laughed, each luckless mate  
Might hold our fortune desperate.  
Foremost he fought in every broil,  
Then scornful turned him from the spoil;  
Nay, often strove to bar the way  
Between his comrades and their prey;  
Preaching, even then, to such as we,  
Hot with our dear-bought victory,  
Of mercy and humanity!

## XXIII.

„I loved him well — his fearless part,  
His gallant leading won my heart.  
And after each victorious fight  
'Twas I that wrangled for his right,  
Redeemed his portion of the prey  
That greedier mates had torn away,  
In field and storm thrice saved his life,  
And once amaid our comrades' strife. —

## XVII.

Bayerische  
Staatsbibliothek  
München



Yes, I have loved thee! well hath proved  
My toil, my danger, how I loved!  
Yet will I mourn no more thy fate,  
Ingrate in life, in death ingrate.  
Rise, if thou canst!" he looked around,  
And sternly stamped upon the ground —  
"Rise, with thy bearing proud and high,  
Even as this morn it met mine eye,  
And give me, if thou darest, the lie!" —  
He paused — then, calm and passion-freed,  
Bade Denzil with his tale proceed.

## XXIV.

"Bertram, to thee I need not tell,  
What thou hast cause to wot so well,  
How superstition's nets were twined  
Around the lord of Mortham's mind;  
But since he drove thee from his tower,  
A maid he found in Greta's bower,  
Whose speech, like David's harp, had sway,  
To charm his evil fiend away.  
I know not if her features moved  
Remembrance of the wife he loved;  
But he would gaze upon her eye,  
Till his mood softened to a sigh.  
He, whom no living mortal sought  
To question of his secret thought,  
Now every thought and care confessed!



To his fair niece's faithful breast;  
 Nor was there aught of rich and rare,  
 In earth, in ocean, or in air,  
 But it must deck Matilda's hair.  
 Her love still bound him unto life;  
 But then awoke the civil strife,  
 And menials bore, by his commands,  
 Three coffers with their iron bands,  
 From Mortham's vault, at midnight deep,  
 To her lone bower in Rokeby-Keep,  
 Ponderous with gold and plate of pride,  
 His gift, if he in battle died." —

## XXV.

"Then Denzil, as I guess, lays strain,  
 These iron-banded chests to gain;  
 Else, wherefore should he hover here,  
 Where many a peril waits him near,  
 For all his feats of war and peace,  
 For plundered boors and harts of greece?\*)  
 Since through the hamlets as he fared,  
 What hearth has Guy's marauding spared,  
 Or where the Chace that hath not rung  
 With Denzil's bow at midnight strung?" —  
 — "I hold my wont — my rangers go

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\*) Deer in season.



Even now to track a milk-white doe.  
By Rokeby-hall she takes her lair,  
In Greta wood she harbours fair,  
And when my huntsman marks her way,  
What think'st thou, Bertram, of the prey?  
Were Rokeby's daughter in our power,  
We rate her ransom at her dower." —

## XXVI.

"'Tis well! — there's vengeance in the thought!  
Matilda is by Wilfrid sought,  
And hot-brained Redmond, too, 'tis said,  
Pays lover's homage to the maid.  
Bertram she scorned — if met by chance,  
She turned from me her shuddering glance,  
Like a nice dame, that will not brook  
On what she hates and loathes to look;  
She told to Mortham, she could ne'er  
Behold me without secret fear,  
Foreboding evil: — she may rue  
To find her prophecy fall true! —  
The war has weeded Rokeby's train,  
Few followers in his halls remain;  
If thy scheme miss, then brief and bold,  
We are enow to storm the hold,  
Bear off the plunder and the dame,  
And leave the castle all in flame." —



## XXVII.

«Still art thou Valour's venturous son!  
Yet ponder first the risk to run;  
The menials of the castle, true,  
And stubborn to their charge, though few;  
The wall to scale — the moat to cross —  
The wicket-grate — the inner fosse" —  
— «Fool! if we blench for toys like these,  
On what fair guerdon can we seize?  
Our hardest venture, to explore  
Some wretched peasant's fenceless door,  
And the best prize we bear away,  
The earnings of his sordid day." —  
— «Awhile thy hasty taunt forbear:  
In sight of road more sure and fair,  
Thou would'st not chuse, in blindfold wrath,  
Or wantonness, a desperate path?  
List then; — for vantage or assault,  
From gilded vane to dungeon-vault,  
Each pass of Rokeby-house I know:  
There is one postern dark and low,  
That issues at a secret spot,  
By most neglected or forgot.  
Now, could a spial of our train  
On fair pretext admittance gain,  
That sally-port might be unbarred;  
Then, vain were battlement and ward!" —



## XXVIII.

“Now speak'st thou well; — to me the same,  
 If force or art shall urge the game;  
 Indifferent if like fox I wind,  
 Or spring like tyger on the hind. —  
 But hark! our merry-men so gay  
 Troll forth another roundelay.

## SONG.

“A weary lot is thine, fair maid,  
 A weary lot is thine!  
 To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,  
 And press the rue for wine!  
 A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,  
 A feather of the blue,  
 A doublet of the Lincoln green, —  
 No more of me you knew,

My love!

No more of me you knew.

“This morn is merry June, I trow,  
 The rose is budding fain;  
 But she shall bloom in winter snow,

Ere we two meet again ” —

He turn'd his charger as he spake,

Upon the river shore,

He gave his bridle-reins a shake,

Said, “Adieu for evermore,

My love!

And adieu for evermore.” —



## XXIX.

“What youth is this, your band among,  
The best for minstrelsy and song?  
In his wild notes seem aptly met  
A strain of pleasure and regret.” —

“Edmund of Winston is his name;  
The hamlet sounded with the fame  
Of early hopes his childhood gave, —  
Now centered all in Brignal cave!  
I watch him well — his wayward course  
Shows oft a tincture of remorse.  
Some early love-shaft gazed his heart,  
And oft the scar will ache and smart.  
Yet is he useful; — of the rest  
By fits the darling and the jest,  
His harp, his story, and his lay,  
Oft aid the idle hours away:  
When unemploy’d, each fiery mate  
Is ripe for mutinous debate.  
He tuned his strings e’en now — again  
He wakes them, with a blither strain.

## XXX.

## SONG.

## ALLEN - A - DALE.

Allen - a - Dale has no faggot for burning,  
Allen - a - Dale has no furrow for turning,



Allen - a - Dale has no fleece for the spinning,  
Yet Allen - a - Dale has red gold for the winning,  
Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken my tale!  
And tell me the craft of bold Allen - a - Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,  
And he views his domains upon Arkindale side,  
The mere for his net, and the land for his game,  
The chace for the wild, and the park for the tame;  
Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale,  
Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen - a - Dale!

Allen - a - Dale was ne'er belted a knight,  
Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as  
bright;  
Allen - a - Dale is no baron or lord,  
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;  
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,  
Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen - a -  
Dale.

Allen - a - Dale to his wooing is come;  
The mother, she asked of his household and home:  
"Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on  
the hill,  
My hall," quoth bold Allen, "shews gallanter still;



'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent  
so pale,  
And with all its bright spangles!" said Allen-a-  
Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone;  
They lifted the latch, and they bade him be gone;  
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry!  
He had laughed on the lass with his bonny black  
eye,

And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,  
And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-Dale!

## XXXI.

"Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,  
Love mingles ever in his lay.  
But when his boyish wayward fit  
Is o'er, he hath address and wit;  
O! 'tis a brain of fire, can ape  
Each dialect, each various shape." —  
"Nay, then, to aid thy project, Guy —  
Soft! who comes here?" — "My trusty spy.  
Speak, Hamlin! hast thou lodged our deer?" —  
"I have — but two fair stags are near;  
I watched her as she slowly strayed  
From Eligstone up Thorsgill glade;  
But Wilfrid Wicliffe sought her side,  
And then young Redmond in his pride



Shot down to meet them on their way;  
 Much, as it seemed, was theirs to say:  
 There's time to pitch both toil and net,  
 Before their path be homeward set." —

A hurried and a whispered speech  
 Did Bertram's will to Denzil teach,  
 Who, turning to the robber band,  
 Bade four the bravest take the brand.

END OF CANTO THIRD.

XXXI.



# R O K E B Y.

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## CANTO FOURTH.

Wann Denmark's Fens rose on high,  
Thine sheet through Northern sky,  
Till, hovering near, her sail crack'd  
Hada, Hoga's, Hoga's broad ice pale;  
And the broad shadow of his wing  
Blacken'd each cataract and spring.  
Where, then, in tumult leaves his source,  
Thundering o'er Caldera and High Forge;  
Beneath the shade the Northernmen came,  
Fixed on each side a Rune name,  
Rang'd high their altar, ragged stone,  
And gave their Gods the land they won.







# R O K E B Y.

## CANTO FOURTH.

### I.

**W**HEN Denmark's Raven soared on high,  
 Triumphant through Northumbrian sky,  
 Till, hovering near, her fatal croak  
 Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke,  
 And the broad shadow of her wing  
 Blackened each cataract and spring,  
 Where Tees in tumult leaves his source,  
 Thundering o'er Caldron and High Force;  
 Beneath the shade the Northmen came,  
 Fixed on each vale a Runic name,  
 Reared high their altars' rugged stone,  
 And gave their Gods the land they won.



Then, Balder, one bleak garth was thine,  
And one sweet brooklet's silver line,  
And Woden's Croft did title gain  
From the stern Father of the Slain;  
But to the Monarch of the Mace,  
That held in fight the foremost place,  
To Odin's son, and Sif's spouse,  
Near Startforth high they paid their vows,  
Remembered Thor's victorious fame,  
And gave the dell the Thunderer's name.

## II.

Yet Scald or Kemper erred, I ween,  
Who gave that soft and quiet scene,  
With all its varied light and shade,  
And every little sunny glade,  
And the blithe brook that strolls along;  
Its pebbled bed with summer song,  
To the grim God of blood and scar,  
The grisly King of Northern War.  
O better were its banks assigned  
To spirits of a gentler kind!  
For; where the thicket-groupes recede,  
And the rathe primrose decks the mead,  
The velvet grass seems carpet meet  
For the light fairies' lively feet.  
Yon tufted knoll, with daisies strown,  
Might make proud Oberon a throne,



While, hidden in the thicket nigh,  
Puck should brood o'er his frolick sly;  
And where profuse the wood-vetch clings,  
Round ash and elm in verdant rings,  
Its pale and azure-pencilled flower  
Should canopy Titania's bower.

## III.

Here rise no cliffs the vale to shade,  
But, skirting every sunny glade,  
In fair variety of green  
The woodland lends its sylvan screen.  
Hoary, yet haughty, frowns the oak,  
Its boughs by weight of ages broke;  
And towers erect, in sable spire,  
The pine-tree scathed by lightning fire,  
The drooping ash and birch, between,  
Hang their fair tresses o'er the green,  
And all beneath, at random grow  
Each coppice dwarf of varied show,  
Or, round the stems profusely twined,  
Fling summer odours on the wind.  
Such varied groupe Urbino's hand  
Round Him of Tarsus nobly planned,  
What time he bade proud Athens own  
On Mars's Mount the God Unknown!  
Then grey Philosophy stood nigh,  
Though bent by age, in spirit high;



There rose the scar-seamed Veteran's spear,  
There Grecian Beauty bent to hear,  
While Childhood at her foot was placed,  
Or clung delighted to her waist.

## IV.

«And rest we here,” Matilda said,  
And sate her in the varying shade.  
«Chance-met, we well may steal an hour,  
To friendship due from fortune's power.  
Thou, Wilfrid, ever kind, must lend  
Thy counsel to thy sister-friend;  
And, Redmond, thou, at my behest,  
No farther urge thy desperate quest.  
For to my care a charge is left,  
Dangerous to one of aid bereft,  
Well-nigh an orphan, and alone,  
Captive her sire, her house o'erthrown.” —  
Wilfrid, with wonted kindness graced,  
Beside her on the turf she placed,  
Then paused, with downcast look and eye,  
Nor bade young Redmond seat him nigh.  
Her conscious diffidence he saw,  
Drew backward as in modest awe,  
And sate a little space removed,  
Unmarked to gaze on her he loved.



## V.

Wreathed in its dark-brown rings, her hair  
Half hid Matilda's forehead fair,  
Half hid and half revealed to view  
Her full dark eye of hazel hue.  
The rose, with faint and feeble streak,  
So slightly tinged the maiden's cheek,  
That you had said her hue was pale;  
But if she faced the summer gale,  
Or spoke, or sung, or quicker moved,  
Or heard the praise of those she loved,  
Or when of interest was expressed  
Aught that waked feeling in her breast,  
The mantling blood in ready play  
Rivalled the blush of rising day.  
There was a soft and pensive grace,  
A cast of thought upon her face,  
That suited well the forehead high,  
The eye-lash dark and down-cast eye;  
The mild expression spoke a mind  
In duty firm, composed, resigned; —  
'Tis that which Roman art has given,  
To mark their maiden Queen of heaven.  
In hours of sport, that mood gave way  
To Fancy's light and frolic play;  
And when the dance, or tale, or song,  
In harmless mirth sped time along,  
Full oft her doating sire would call

XVII.

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His Maud the merriest of them all.  
But days of war, and civil crime,  
Allowed but ill such festal time,  
And her soft pensiveness of brow  
Had deepened into sadness now.  
In Marston field her father ta'en,  
Her friends dispersed, brave Mortham slain,  
While every ill her soul foretold,  
From Oswald's thirst of power and gold,  
And boding thoughts that she must part  
With a soft vision of her heart, —  
All lowered around the lovely maid,  
To darken her dejection's shade.

## VI.

Who has not heard — while Erin yet  
Strove 'gainst the Saxon's iron bit —  
Who has not heard how brave O'Neale  
In English blood embrued his steel,  
Against St George's cross blazed high  
The banners of his Tanistry,  
To fiery Essex gave the foil,  
And reigned a prince in Ulster's soil?  
But chief arose his victor pride,  
When that brave Marshal fought and died,  
And Avon-Duff to ocean bore  
His billows, red with Saxon gore.  
'Twas first in that disastrous fight,



Rokeby and Mortham proved their might.  
There had they fallen amongst the rest,  
But pity touched a chieftain's breast;  
The Tanist he to great O'Neale,  
He checked his followers' bloody zeal,  
To quarter took the kinsmen bold,  
And bore them to his mountain-hold,  
Gave them each sylvan joy to know,  
Slieve-Donard's cliffs and woods could show,  
Shared with them Erin's festal cheer,  
Showed them the chace of wolf and deer,  
And, when a fitting time was come,  
Safe and unransomed sent them home,  
Loaded with many a gift, to prove  
A generous foe's respect and love.

## VII.

Years speed away. On Rokeby's head  
Some touch of early snow was shed;  
Calm he enjoyed, by Greta's wave,  
The peace which James the Peaceful gave;  
While Mortham, far beyond the main,  
Waged his fierce wars on Indian Spain. —  
It chanced upon a wintry night,  
That whitened Stanmore's stormy height,  
The chace was o'er, the stag was killed,  
In Rokeby-hall the cups were filled,  
And by the huge stone chimney sate



The Knight, in hospitable state.  
Moonless the sky, the hour was late,  
When a loud summons shook the gate,  
And sore for entrance and for aid  
A voice of foreign accent prayed.  
The porter answered to the call,  
And instant rushed into the hall  
A Man, whose aspect and attire  
Startled the circle by the fire.

## VIII.

His plaited hair in elf-locks spread  
Around his bare and matted head;  
On leg and thigh, close stretched and trim,  
His vesture shewed the sinewy limb;  
In saffron dyed, a linen vest  
Was frequent folded round his breast;  
A mantle long and loose he wore,  
Shaggy with ice, and stained with gore.  
He clasped a burthen to his heart,  
And, resting on a knotted dart,  
The snow from hair and beard he shook,  
And round him gazed with wildered look.  
Then up the hall, with staggering pace,  
He hastened by the blaze to place,  
Half lifeless from the bitter air,  
His load, a Boy of beauty rare.  
To Rokeby, next, he louted low,



Then stood erect his tale to show,  
With wild majestic port and tone;  
Like envoy of some barbarous throne.  
"Sir Richard, Lord of Rokeby, hear!  
Turlough O'Neale salutes thee dear;  
He graces thee, and to thy care  
Young Redmond gives, his grandson fair.  
He bids thee breed him as thy son,  
For Turlough's days of joy are done;  
And other lords have seized his land,  
And faint and feeble is his hand,  
And all the glory of Tyrone  
Is like a morning vapour flown.  
To bind the duty on thy soul,  
He bids thee think on Erin's bowl!  
If any wrong the young O'Neale,  
He bids thee think of Erin's steel.  
To Mortham first this charge was due,  
But, in his absence, honours you. —  
Now is my master's message by,  
And Ferraught will contented die."

## IX.

His look grew fixed, his cheek grew pale,  
He sunk when he had told his tale;  
For, hid beneath his mantle wide,  
A mortal wound was in his side.  
Vain was all aid — in terror wild,



And sorrow, screamed the orphan child.  
Poor Ferraight raised his wistful eyes,  
And faintly strove to sooth his cries;  
All reckless of his dying pain,  
He blest, and blest him o'er again!  
And kissed the little hands outspread,  
And kissed and crossed the infant head,  
And, in his native tongue and phrase,  
Prayed to each saint to watch his days;  
Then all his strength together drew,  
The charge to Rokeby to renew.  
When half was faltered from his breast,  
And half by dying signs expressed,  
"Bless the O'Neale!" he faintly said,  
And thus the faithful spirit fled.

## X.

'Twas long ere soothing might prevail  
Upon the child to end the tale;  
And then he said, that from his home  
His grandsire had been forced to roam,  
Which had not been if Redmond's hand  
Had but had strength to draw the brand,  
The brand of Lenaugh More the Red,  
That hung beside the grey wolves head. —  
'Twas from his broken phrase descried,  
His foster-father was his guide,  
Who, in his charge, from Ulster bore



Letters, and gifts a goodly store;  
But ruffians met them in the wood,  
Ferraught in battle boldly stood,  
Till wounded and o'erpowered at length,  
And stripped of all, his failing strength  
Just bore him here — and then the child  
Renewed again his moaning wild.

## XI.

The tear, down Childhood's cheek that flows,  
Is like the dew-drop on the rose;  
When next the summer breeze comes by,  
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.  
Won by their care, the orphan child  
Soon on his new protectors smiled,  
With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,  
Through his thick curls of flaxen hair.  
But blithest laughed that cheek and eye,  
When Rokeby's little maid was nigh;  
'Twas his, with elder brother's pride,  
Matilda's tottering steps to guide;  
His native lays in Irish tongue,  
To sooth her infant ear he sung,  
And primrose twined with daisy fair,  
To form a chaplet for her hair.  
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,  
The children still were hand and hand,



And good Sir Richard smiling eyed,  
The early knot so kindly tied.

## XII.

But summer months bring wilding shoot  
From bud to bloom, from bloom to fruit;  
And years draw on our human span,  
From child to boy, from boy to man;  
And soon in Rokeby's woods is seen  
A gallant boy in hunter's green.  
He loves to wake the felon boar,  
In his dark haunt on Greta's shore,  
And loves, against the deer so dun,  
To draw the shaft, or lift the gun;  
Yet more he loves, in autumn prime,  
The hazel's spreading boughs to climb,  
And down its clustered stores to hail,  
Where young Matilda holds her veil.  
And she, whose veil receives the shower,  
Is altered too, and knows her power;  
Assumes a monitresses pride,  
Her Redmond's dangerous sports to chide,  
Yet listens still to hear him tell  
How the grim wild-boar fought and fell,  
How at his fall the bagle rung,  
Till rock and green-wood answer flung;  
Then blesses her, that man can find  
A pastime of such savage kind!



## XIII.

But Redmond knew to weave his tale  
So well with praise of wood and dale,  
And knew so well each point to trace,  
Gives living interest to the chase,  
And knew so well o'er all to throw  
His spirit's wild romantic glow,  
That, while she blamed, and while she feared,  
She loved each venturous tale she heard.  
Oft, too, when drifted snow and rain  
To bower and hall their steps restrain,  
Together they explored the page  
Of glowing bard or gifted sage;  
Oft, placed the evening fire beside,  
The minstrel art alternate tried,  
While gladsome harp and lively lay  
Bade winter-night flit fast away:  
Thus from their childhood blending still  
Their sport, their study, and their skill,  
An union of the soul they prove,  
But must not think that it was love.  
But though they dared not, envious **Fame**  
Soon dared to give that union name;  
And when so often, side by side,  
From year to year the pair she eyed,  
She sometimes blamed the good old Knight,  
As dull of ear and dim of sight,  
Sometimes his purpose would declare,  
That young O'Neale should wed his heir.



## XIV.

The suit of Wilfrid rent disguise  
And bandage from the lovers' eyes;  
'Twas plain that Oswald, for his son,  
Had Rokeby's favour well nigh won.  
Now must they meet with change of cheer,  
With mutual looks of shame and fear;  
Now must Matilda stray apart,  
To school her disobedient heart;  
And Redmond now alone must rue  
The love he never can subdue.  
But factions rose, and Rokeby swore,  
No rebel's son should wed his heir;  
And Redmond, nurtured while a child  
In many a bard's traditions wild,  
Now sought the lonely wood or stream,  
To cherish there a happier dream,  
Of maiden won by sword or lance,  
As in the regions of romance;  
And count the heroes of his line,  
Great Nial of the Pledges Nine,  
Shane-Dymas wild, and Geraldine,  
And Connan-More, who vowed his race  
For ever to the fight and chase,  
And cursed him, of his lineage born,  
Should sheathe the sword to reap the corn,  
Or leave the mountain and the wold,  
To shroud himself in castled hold.



From such examples hope he drew,  
And brightened as the trumpet blew.

## XV.

If brides were won by heart and blade,  
Redmond had both his cause to aid,  
And all beside of nurture rare  
That might beseem a baron's heir.  
Turloug O'Neale, in Erin's strife,  
On Rokeby's Lord bestowed his life,  
And well did Rokeby's generous knight  
Young Redmond for the deed requite.  
Nor was his liberal care and cost  
Upon the gallant stripling lost:  
Seek the North Riding broad and wide,  
Like Redmond none could steed bestride;  
From Tynemouth search to Cumberland,  
Like Redmond none could wield a brand;  
And then, of humour kind and free,  
And bearing him to each degree  
With frank and fearless courtesy,  
There never youth was formed to steal  
Upon the heart like brave O'Neale.

## XVI.

Sir Richard loved him as his son,  
And when the days of peace were done,



And to the gales of war he gave  
The banner of his sires to wave,  
Redmond, distinguished by his care,  
He chose that honoured flag to bear,  
And named his page, the next degree  
In that old time to chivalry.  
In five pitched fields he well maintained  
The honoured place his worth obtained,  
And high was Redmond's youthful name  
Blazed in the roll of martial fame.  
Had fortune smiled on Marston fight,  
The eve had seen him dubbed a knight;  
Twice, 'mid the battle's doubtful strife,  
Of Rokeby's lord he saved the life,  
But when he saw him prisoner made,  
He kissed and then resigned his blade,  
And yielded him an easy prey  
To those who led the Knight away.  
Resolved Matilda's sire should prove  
In prison, as in fight, his love.

## XVII.

When lovers meet in adverse hour,  
'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a shower,  
A watry ray an instant seen  
The darkly-closing clouds between.  
As Redmond on the turf reclined,  
The past and present filled his mind;



“It was not thus,” Affection said,  
“I dreamed of my return, dear maid!  
Not thus, when, from thy trembling hand,  
I took the banner and the brand,  
When round me, as the bugles blew,  
Their blades three hundred warriors drew,  
And, while the standard I unrolled,  
Clashed their bright arms with clamour bold.  
Where is that banner now? — its pride  
Lies whelmed in Ouzees sullen tide!  
Where now these warriors? — in their gore,  
They cumber Marstones dismal moor!  
And what avails a useless brand,  
Held by a captive’s shackled hand,  
That only would his life retain,  
To aid thy sire to bear his chain!” —  
Thus Redmond to himself apart,  
Nor lighter was his rival’s heart;  
For Wilfrid, while his generous soul  
Disdained to profit by controul,  
By many a sign could mark too plain,  
Save with such aid, his hopes were vain.  
But now Matilda’s accents stole  
On the dark visions of their soul,  
And bade their mournful musing fly,  
Like mist before the zephyr’s sigh.



## XVIII.

“I need not to my friends recall,  
How Mortham shunned my father's hall;  
A man of silence and of woe,  
Yet ever anxious to bestow  
On my poor self whate'er could prove  
A kinsman's confidence and love.  
My feeble aid could sometimes chase  
The clouds of sorrow for a space,  
But oftener, fixed beyond my power,  
I marked his deep despondence lower.  
One dismal cause, by all unguessed,  
His fearful confidence confessed;  
And twice it was my hap to see  
Examples of that agony,  
Which for a season can o'erstrain  
And wreck the structure of the brain.  
He had the awful power to know  
The approaching mental overthrow,  
And while his mind had courage yet  
To struggle with the dreadful fit,  
The victim writhed against its throes,  
Like wretch beneath a murderer's blows.  
This malady, I well could mark,  
Sprung from some direful cause and dark;  
But still he kept its source concealed,  
Till arming for the civil field;  
Then in my charge he bade me hold



A treasure huge of gems and gold,  
With this disjointed dismal scroll  
That tells the secret of his soul,  
In such wild words as of betray  
A mind by anguish forced astray.

## XIX.

## MORTHAM'S HISTORY.

«Matilda! thou hast seen me start,  
As if a dagger thrilled my heart,  
When it has happed some casual phrase  
Waked memory of my former days.  
Believe, that few can backward cast  
Their thought with pleasure on the past;  
But I! — my youth was rash and vain,  
And blood and rage my manhood stain,  
And my grey hairs must now descend  
To my cold grave without a friend!  
Even thou, Matilda, wilt disown  
Thy kinsman, when his guilt is known.  
And must I lift the bloody veil,  
That hides my dark and fatal tale!  
I must — I will — Pale phantom, cease!  
Leave me one little hour in peace!  
Thus haunted, thinkest thou I have skill  
Thine own commission to fulfil?  
Or, while thou pointest, with gesture fierce,



Thy blighted cheek, thy bloody hearse,  
How can I paint thee as thou wert,  
So fair in face, so warm in heart! —

## XX.

Yes, she was fair! — Matilda, thou  
Hast a soft sadness on thy brow;  
But her's was like the sunny glow,  
That laughs on earth and all below!  
We wedded secret — there was need —  
Differing in country and in creed;  
And when to Mortham's tower she came,  
We mentioned not her race and name,  
Until thy sire, who fought afar,  
Should turn him home from foreign war,  
On whose kind influence we relied  
To sooth her father's ire and pride.  
Few months we lived retired, unknown  
To all but one dear friend alone,  
One darling friend — I spare his shame,  
I will not write the villain's name!  
My trespasses I might forget,  
And sue in vengeance for the debt  
Due by a brother worm to me,  
Ungrateful to God's clemency,  
That spared me penitential time,  
Nor cut me off amid my crime. —



## XXI.

«A kindly smile to all she lent,  
But on her husband's friend 'twas bent  
So kind, that, from its harmless glee,  
The wretch misconstrued villainy.  
Repulsed in his presumptuous love,  
A vengeful snare the traitor wove.  
Alone we sate — the flask had flowed,  
My blood with heat unwonted glowed,  
When through the alleys walk we spied  
With hurried step my Edith glide,  
Cowering beneath the verdant screen,  
As one unwilling to be seen.  
Words cannot paint the fiendish smile,  
That curled the traitor's cheek the while!  
Fiercely I questioned of the cause;  
He made a cold and artful pause,  
Then prayed it might not chafe my mood —  
«There was a gallant in the wood!» —  
We had been shooting at the deer;  
My cross-bow (evil chance!) was near:  
That ready weapon of my wrath  
I caught, and, hasting up the path,  
In the yew grove my wife I found,  
A stranger's arms her neck had bound!  
I marked his heart — the bow I drew —  
I loosed the shaft — 'twas more than true!  
I found my Edith's dying charms

XVII.

I



Locked in her murdered brother's arms!  
He came in secret to enquire  
Her state, and reconcile her sire. —

## XXII.

“All fled my rage — the villain first,  
Whose craft my jealousy had nursed;  
He sought in far and foreign clime  
To 'scape the vengeance of his crime.  
The manner of the slaughter done  
Was known to few, my guilt to none;  
Some tale my faithful steward framed —  
I know not what — of shaft mis-aimed;  
And even from those the act who knew,  
He hid the hand from which it flew.  
Untouched by human laws I stood,  
But God had heard the cry of blood!  
There is a blank upon my mind,  
A fearful vision ill-defined,  
Of raving till my flesh was torn,  
Of dungeon-bolts and fetters worn —  
And when I waked to woe more mild,  
And questioned of my infant child —  
(Have I not written, that she bare  
A boy, like summer morning fair?)  
With looks confused my menials tell  
That armed men in Mortham dell  
Beset the nurse's evening way,



And bore her, with her charge, away.  
My faithless friend, and none but he,  
Could profit by this villainy;  
Him, then, I sought, with purpose dread  
Of treble vengeance on his head!  
He scaped me — but my bosom's wound  
Some faint relief from wandering found,  
And over distant land and sea  
I bore my load of misery.

## XXIII.

«'Twas then that fate my footsteps led  
Among a daring crew and dread,  
With whom full oft my hated life  
I ventured in such desperate strife,  
That even my fierce associates saw  
My frantic deeds with doubt and awe.  
Much then I learned, and much can show,  
Of human guilt and human woe,  
Yet ne'er have, in my wanderings, known  
A wretch, whose sorrows matched my own! —  
It chanced, that after battle fray,  
Upon the bloody field we lay;  
The yellow moon her lustre shed  
Upon the wounded and the dead,  
While, sense in toil and wassail drowned,  
My ruffian comrades slept around.  
There came a voice — its silver tone



Was soft, Matilda, as thine own —  
“Ah, wretch!” it said, “what makest thou here,  
While unavenged my bloody bier,  
While unprotected lives mine heir,  
Without a father’s name and care?” —

## XXIV.

“I heard — obeyed — and homeward drew;  
The fiercest of our desperate crew  
I brought, at time of need to aid  
My purposed vengeance, long delayed.  
But, humble be my thanks to heaven,  
That better hopes and thoughts has given,  
And by our Lord’s dear prayer has taught,  
Mercy by mercy must be bought! —  
Let me in misery rejoice —  
I’ve seen his face — I’ve heard his voice —  
I claimed of him my only child —  
As he disowned the theft, he smiled!  
That very calm and callous look,  
That fiendish sneer his visage took,  
As when he said, in scornful mood,  
“There is a gallant in the wood!” —  
— I did not slay him as he stood —  
All praise be to my Maker given!  
Long sufferance is one path to heaven.” —



## XXV.

Thus far the woeful tale was heard,  
When something in the thicket stirred.  
Up Redmond sprung; the villain Guy,  
(For he it was that lurked so nigh)  
Drew back — he durst not cross his steel  
A moment's space with brave O'Neale,  
For all the treasured gold that rests  
In Mortham's iron-banded chests.  
Redmond resumed his seat; — he said,  
Some roe was rustling in the shade.  
Bertram laughed grimly, when he saw  
His timorous comrade backward draw:  
„A trusty mate art thou, to fear  
A single arm, and aid so near!  
Yet have I seen thee mark a deer.  
Give me thy carabine — I'll show  
An art that thou wilt gladly know,  
How thou mayest safely quell a foe.” —

## XXVI.

On hands and knees fierce Bertram drew  
The spreading birch and hazels through,  
Till he had Redmond full in view.  
The gun he levelled — mark like this  
Was Bertram never known to miss,  
When fair opposed to aim there sate



An object of his mortal hate.  
That day young Redmond's death had seen,  
But twice Matilda came between  
The carabine and Redmond's breast,  
Just ere the spring his finger pressed.  
A deadly oath the ruffian swore,  
But yet his fell design forbore:  
"It ne'er," he muttered, "shall be said,  
That thus I scathed thee, haughty maid!"  
Then moved to seek more open aim,  
When to his side Guy Denzil came:  
"Bertram forbear! — we are undone  
For ever, if thou fire the gun.  
By all the fiends, an armed force  
Descends the dell, of foot and horse!  
We perish if they hear a shot —  
Madman! we have a safer plot —  
Nay, friend, be ruled, and bear thee back!  
Behold, down yonder hollow track,  
The warlike leader of the band  
Comes, with his broad-sword in his hand." —  
Bertram looked up; he saw, he knew,  
That Denzil's fears had counselled true,  
Then cursed his fortune and withdrew,  
Threaded the woodlands undescried,  
And gained the cave on Greta-side.



## XXVII.

They whom dark Bertram, in his wrath,  
Doomed to captivity or death,  
Their thoughts to one sad subject lent,  
Saw not nor heard the ambushment.  
Heedless and unconcerned they sate,  
While on the very verge of fate;  
Heedless and unconcerned remained,  
When Heaven the murderer's arm restrained;  
As ships drift darkling down the tide,  
Nor see the shelves o'er which they glide.  
Uninterrupted thus they heard  
What Mortham's closing tale declared.  
He spoke of wealth as of a load,  
By Fortune on a wretch bestowed,  
In bitter mockery of hate,  
His cureless woes to aggravate;  
But yet he prayed Matilda's care  
Might save that treasure for his heir —  
His Edith's son — for still he raved  
As confident his life was saved:  
In frequent vision, he averred,  
He saw his face, his voice he heard,  
Then argued calm — had murder been,  
The blood, the corpses, had been seen;  
Some had pretended, too, to mark  
On Windermere a stranger bark,  
Whose crew with jealous care, yet mild,



Guarded a female and a child.

While these faint proofs he told and pressed,  
Hope seemed to kindle in his breast;  
Though inconsistent, vague, and vain,  
It warped his judgment and his brain.

### XXVIII.

These solemn words his story close: —

„Heaven witness for me, that I chose

My part in this sad civil fight,

Moved by no cause but England's right.

My country's groans have bid me draw

My sword for gospel and for law; —

These righted, I fling arms aside,

And seek my son through Europe wide.

My wealth, on which a kinsman nigh

Already casts a grasping eye,

With thee may unsuspected lie.

When of my death Matilda hears,

Let her retain her trust three years;

If none, from me, the treasure claim,

Perished is Mortham's race and name;

Then let it leave her generous hand,

And flow in bounty o'er the land,

Softens the wounded prisoner's lot,

Rebuild the peasant's ruined cot;

So spoils, acquired by fight afar,

Shall mitigate domestic war.” —



## XXIX.

The generous youths, who well had known  
Of Mortham's mind the powerful tone,  
To that high mind, by sorrow swerved,  
Gave sympathy his woes deserved;  
But Wilfrid chief, who saw revealed  
Why Mortham wished his life concealed,  
In secret, doubtless, to pursue  
The schemes his wildered fancy drew.  
Thoughtful he heard Matilda tell,  
That she would share her father's cell,  
His partner of captivity,  
Where'er his prison-house should be;  
Yet grieved to think that Rokeby-hall,  
Dismantled, and forsook by all,  
Open to rapine and to stealth,  
Had now no safe-guard for the wealth  
Entrusted by her kinsman kind,  
And for such noble use designed.  
"Was Barnard-Castle then her choice,"  
Wilfrid enquired with hasty voice,  
"Since there the victor's laws ordain,  
Her father must a space remain?" —  
A fluttered hope his accents shook,  
A fluttered joy was in his look.  
Matilda hastened to reply,  
For anger flashed in Redmond's eye; —  
"Duty," she said with gentle grace,



«Kind Wilfrid, has no choice of place;  
Else had I for my sire assigned  
Prison less galling to his mind,  
Than that his wild-wood haunts which sees,  
And hears the murmur of the Tees,  
Recalling thus, with every glance,  
What captive's sorrow can enhance;  
But where those woes are highest, there  
Needs Rokeby most his daughter's care.» —

## XXX.

He felt the kindly cheek she gave,  
And stood abashed — then answered grave; —  
»I sought thy purpose, noble maid,  
Thy doubts to clear, thy schemes to aid.  
I have beneath mine own command,  
So wills my sire, a gallant band,  
And well could send some horsemen wight  
To bear the treasure forth by night,  
And so bestow it as you deem  
In these ill days may safest seem.» —  
«Thanks, gentle Wilfrid, thanks,» she said:  
«O be it not one day delayed!  
And, more thy sister-friend to aid,  
Be thou thyself content to hold,  
In thine own keeping, Mortham's gold,  
Safest with thee.» — While thus she spoke,  
Armed soldiers on their converse broke,



The same of whose approach afraid,  
The ruffians left their ambuscade.  
Their chief to Wilfrid bended low,  
Then looked around as for a foe.  
“What meanest thou, friend,” young Wycliffe  
said,

“Why thus in arms beset the glade?”  
— “That would I gladly learn from you;  
For up my squadron as I drew,  
To exercise our martial game  
Upon the moor of Barninghame,  
A stranger told you were way-laid,  
Surrounded, and to death betrayed.  
He had a leader’s voice, I ween,  
A falcon glance, a warrior’s mien.  
He bade me bring you instant aid;  
I doubted not, and I obeyed.” —

## XXXI.

Wilfrid changed colour, and, amazed,  
Turned short, and on the speaker gazed,  
While Redmond every thicket round  
Tracked earnest as a questing hound,  
And Denzil’s carabine he found;  
Sure evidence, by which they knew  
The warning was as kind as true.  
Wisest it seemed, with cautious speed  
To leave the dell. It was agreed,



That Redmond, with Matilda fair,  
And fitting guard, should home repair;  
At nightfall Wilfrid should attend,  
With a strong band, his sister-friend,  
To bear with her from Rokeby's bowers  
To Barnard-Castle's lofty towers,  
Secret and safe, the banded chests,  
In which the wealth of Mortham rests.  
This hasty purpose fixed, they part,  
Each with a grieved and anxious heart.

END OF CANTO FOURTH.



R O K E B Y.

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CANTO FIFTH.



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R O K E B Y.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

THE sultry summer day is done,
The western hills have hid the sun,
But mountain peak and village spire
Retain reflection of his fire.
Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
To those that gaze from Toller-hill;
Distant and high the tower of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows;
And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold arrayed,
Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.

Thus aged men full loth and slow
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o'er
Till Memory lends her light no more.

II.

The eve, that slow on upland fades,
Has darker closed on Rokeby's glades,
Where, sunk within their banks profound,
Her guardian streams to meeting wound.
The stately oaks, whose sombre frown
Of noontide made a twilight brown,
Impervious now to fainter light,
Of twilight make an early night.
Hoarse into middle air arose
The vespers of the roosting crows,
And with congenial murmurs seem
To wake the Genii of the stream;
For louder clamoured Greta's tide,
And Tees in deeper voice replied,
And fitful waked the evening wind,
Fitful in sighs its breath resigned.
Wilfrid, whose fancy-nurtured soul
Felt in the scene a soft controul,
With lighter footstep pressed the ground,
And often paused to look around;
And, though his path was to his love,
Could not but linger in the grove,
To drink the thrilling interest dear,

Of awful pleasure checked by fear.
Such inconsistent moods have we,
Even when our passions strike the key.

III.

Now through the wood's dark mazes past,
The opening lawn he reached at last,
Where, silvered by the moonlight ray,
The ancient Hall before him lay.
Those martial terrors long were fled,
That frowned of old around its head:
The battlements, the turrets grey,
Seemed half abandoned to decay;
On barbican and keep of stone,
Stern Time the foeman's work had done;
Where banners the invader braved,
The hare-bell now and wall-flower waved;
In the rude guard-room, where of yore
Their weary hours the warders wore,
Now, while the cheerful faggots blaze,
On the paved floor the spindle plays;
The flanking guns dismounted lie,
The moat is ruinous and dry,
The grim portcullis gone — and all
The fortress turned to peaceful hall.

IV.

But yet precautions, lately ta'en,
Shewed danger's day revived again;

XVII.

K

The court-yard wall shewed marks of care,
The fallen defences to repair,
Lending such strength as might withstand
The insult of marauding band.
The beams once more were taught to bear
The trembling draw-bridge into air,
And not, till questioned o'er and o'er,
For Wilfrid oped the jealous door,
And when he entered, bolt and bar
Resumed their place with sullen jar;
Then, as he crossed the vaulted porch,
The old grey porter raised his torch,
And viewed him o'er, from foot to head,
Ere to the hall his steps he led.
That huge old hall, of knightly state,
Dismantled seemed and desolate.
The moon through transom-shafts of shone,
Which crossed the latticed oriels, stone,
And by the mournful light she gave,
The Gothic vault seemed funeral cave.
Pennon and banner waved no more
O'er beams of stag and tusks of boar,
Nor glimmering arms were marshalled seen,
To glance those sylvan spoils between.
Those arms, those ensigns, borne away,
Accomplished Rokeby's brave array,
But all were lost on Marston's day!
Yet, here and there the moon-beams fall
Where armour yet adorns the wall,

Cumbrous of size, uncouth to sight,
And useless in the modern fight;
Like veteran relique of the wars,
Known only by neglected scars.

V.

Matilda soon to greet him came,
And bade them light the evening flame;
Said, all for parting was prepared,
And tarried but for Wilfrid's guard.
But then, reluctant to unfold
His father's avarice of gold,
He hinted, that, lest jealous eye
Should on their precious burthen pry,
He judged it best the castle gate
To enter when the night wore late;
And therefore he had left command
With those he trusted of his band,
That they should be at Rokeby met,
What time the midnight watch was set.
Now Redmond came, whose anxious care
Till then was busied to prepare
All needful, meetly to arrange
The mansion for its mournful change.
With Wilfrid's care and kindness pleased,
His cold unready hand he seized,
And pressed it till his kindly strain
The gentle youth returned again.



Seemed as between them this was said,
"Awhile let jealousy be dead;
And let our contest be, whose care
Shall best assist this helpless fair." —

VI.

There was no speech the truce to bind,
It was a compact of the mind,
A generous thought at once impressed
On either rival's generous breast.
Matilda well the secret took,
From sudden change of mien and look,
And — for not small had been her fear
Of jealous ire and danger near —
Felt, even in her dejected state,
A joy beyond the reach of fate.
They closed beside the chimney's blaze,
And talked and hoped for happier days,
And lent their spirits' rising glow
Awhile to gild impending woe; —
High privilege of youthful time,
Worth all the pleasures of our prime!
The bickering faggot sparkled bright,
And gave the scene of love to sight,
Bade Wilfrid's cheek more lively glow,
Played on Matilda's neck of snow,
Her nut-brown curls and forehead high;
And laughed in Redmond's azure eye.

Two lovers by the maiden sate,
Without a glance of jealous hate;
The maid her lovers sate between,
With open brow and equal mien; —
It is a sight but rarely spied,
Thanks to man's wrath and woman's pride.

VII.

While thus in peaceful guise they sate,
A knock alarmed the outer gate,
And, ere the tardy porter stirred,
The tinkling of a harp was heard.
A manly voice, of mellow swell,
Bore burthen to the music well.

SONG.

«Summer eve is gone and past,
Summer dew is falling fast;
I have wandered all the day,
Do not bid me farther stray!
Gentle hearts of gentle kin,
Take the wandering Harper in! —

But the stern porter answer gave,
With «Get thee hence, thou strolling knave!
The king wants soldiers; war, I trow,
Were meeter trade for such as thou.» —
At this unkind reproof, again
Answered the ready minstrel's strain.

SONG RESUMED.

«Bid not me, in battle-field,
Buckler lift, or broad-sword wield!
All my strength and all my art
Is to touch the gentle heart,
With the wizard notes that ring
From the peaceful minstrel string.» —

The porter, all unmoved, replied, —
«Depart in peace, with heaven to guide;
If longer by the gate thou dwell,
Trust me, thou shalt not part so well.»

VIII.

With somewhat of appealing look,
The Harper's part young Wilfrid took;
«These notes so wild and ready thrill,
They show no vulgar minstrel's skill;
Hard were his task to seek a home
More distant, since the night is come;
And for his faith I dare engage —
Your Harpool's blood is soured by age;
His gate, once readily displayed,
To greet the friend, the poor to aid,
Now even to me, though known of old,
Did but reluctantly unfold.» —
— «O blame not, as poor Harpool's crime,
An evil of this evil time.

He deems dependent on his care
The safety of his patron's heir,
Nor judges meet to ope the tower
To guest unknown at parting hour,
Urging his duty to excess
Of rough and stubborn faithfulness.
For this poor Harper I would fain
He may relax: — hark to his strain!

IX.

SONG RESUMED.

«I have song of war for knight,
Lay of love for lady bright;
Fairy tale to lull the heir,
Goblin grim the maids to scare;
Dark the night, and long till day,
Do not bid me farther stray!

«Rokeby's lords of martial fame,
I can count them name by name;
Legends of their line there be,
Known to few, but known to me;
If you honour Rokeby's kin,
Take the wandering Harper in!

«Rokeby's lords had fair regard
For the harp, and for the bard;
Baron's race throve never well,
Where the curse of minstrell fell.

If you love that noble kin,
Take the weary Harper in!" —

"Hark! Harpool parleys — there is hope,"
Said Redmond, "that the gate will ope." —
— "For all thy brang and boast, I trow,
Nought knowest thou of the Felon Sow,"
Quoth Harpool, "nor how Greta-side
She roamed, and Rokeby forest wide;
Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the beast
To Richmond's friars to make a feast.
Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
That well could strike with sword amain,
And of the valiant son of Spain,
Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir Ralph;
There were a gest to make us laugh!
If thou canst tell it, in yon shed
Thou'st won thy supper and thy bed." —

X.

Matilda smiled; "Cold hope," said she,
"From Harpool's love of minstrelsy!
But, for this Harper, may we dare,
Redmond, to mend his couch and fare?" —
— "O ask not me! at minstrel string
My heart from infancy would spring;
Nor can I hear its simplest strain,
But it brings Erin's dream again,

When placed by Owen Lysagh's knee,
(The Filea of O'Neale was he,
A blind and bearded man, whose eld,
Was sacred as a prophet's held,)
I've seen a ring of rugged kerne,
With aspects shaggy, wild, and stern,
Enchanted by the master's lay,
Linger around the live-long day,
Shift from wild rage to wilder glee,
To love, to grief, to ecstasy,
And feel each varied change of soul
Obedient to the bard's controul. —
Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
Slieve-Donard's oak shall light no more;
Nor Owen's harp, beside the blaze,
Tell maiden's love, or heroes praise!
The mantling brambles hide thy hearth,
Centre of hospitable mirth;
All undistinguished in the glade,
My sires' glad home is prostrate laid,
Their vassals wander wide and far,
Serve foreign lords in distant war,
And now the stranger's sons enjoy
The lovely woods of Clandeboy!" —
He spoke, and proudly turned aside,
The starting tear to dry and hide.

XI.

Matilda's dark and softened eye
Was glistening ere O'Neale's was dry.
Her hand upon his arm she laid, —
«It is the will of heaven,” she said.
«And thinkest thou, Redmond; I can part
From this loved home with lightsome heart,
Leaving to wild neglect whate'er
Even from my infancy was dear?
For in this calm domestic bound
Were all Matilda's pleasures found.
That hearth, my sire was wont to grace,
Full soon may be a stranger's place;
This hall, in which a child I played,
Like thine, dear Redmond, lowly laid,
The bramble and the thorn may braid;
Or, passed for aye from me and mine,
It ne'er may shelter Rokeby's line.
Yet is this consolation given,
My Redmond, — 'tis the will of heaven.” —
Her word, her action, and her phrase,
Were kindly as in early days;
For cold reserve had lost its power,
In sorrow's sympathetic hour,
Young Redmond dared not trust his voice;
But rather had it been his choice
To share that melancholy hour,
Than, armed with all a chieftain's power,

In full possession to enjoy
Slieve-Donard wide, and Clandeboy.

XII.

The blood left Wilfrid's ashen cheek;
Matilda sees, and hastes to speak. —
«Happy in friendships ready aid,
Let all my murmurs here be staid!
And Rokeby's maiden will not part
From Rokeby's hall with moody heart.
This night at least, for Rokeby's fame
The hospitable hearth shall flame,
And, ere its native heir retire,
Find for the wanderer rest and fire,
While this poor Harper, by the blaze,
Recounts the tale of other days.
Bid Harpool ope the door with speed,
Admit him, and relieve each need. —
Meantime, kind Wycliffe, wilt thou try
Thy minstrel skill? — nay, no reply —
And look not sad! — I guess thy thought,
Thy verse with laurels would be bought,
And poor Matilda, landless now,
Has not a garland for thy brow.
True, I must leave sweet Rokeby's glades,
Nor wander more in Greta shades;
But sure, no rigid jailor, thou
Wilt a short prison-walk allow,

Where summer flowers grow wild at will,
On Marwood-chace and Toller-Hill;
Then holly green and lily gay
Shall twine in guerdon of thy lay." —
The mournful youth, a space aside,
To tune Matilda's harp applied;
And then a low sat descant rung,
As prelude to the lay he sung.

XIII.

THE CYPRESS WREATH.

O Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress tree!
Too lively glow the lilies light,
The varnished holly's all too bright,
The May-flower and the eglantine
May shade a brow less sad than mine;
But, Lady, weave no wreath for me,
Or weave it of the cypress tree!

Let dimpled Mirth his temples twine
With tendrils of the laughing vine;
The manly oak, the pensive yew,
To patriot and to sage be due;
The myrtle bough bids lovers live,
But that Matilda will not give;
Then, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress tree!

Let merry England proudly rear
Her blended roses, bought so dear;
Let Albin bind her bonnet blue
With heath and hare-bell dipped in dew;
On favoured Erin's crest be seen
The flower she loves of emerald green —
But, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress tree.

Strike the wild harp, while maids prepare
The ivy meet for minstrel's hair;
And, while his crown of laurel leaves
With bloody hand the victor weaves,
Let the loud trump his triumph tell;
But when you hear the passing-bell,
Then, Lady, twine a wreath for me,
And twine it of the cypress tree.

Yes! twine for me the cypress bough;
But, O Matilda, twine not now!
Stay till a few brief months are past,
And I have looked and loved my last!
When villagers my shroud bestrew
With pansies, rosemary, and rue, —
Then, Lady, weave a wreath for me,
And weave it of the cypress tree.

XIV.

O'Neale observed the starting tear,
And spoke with kind and blithsome cheer —

“No, noble Wilfrid! ere the day
When mourns the land thy silent lay,
Shall many a wreath be freely wove
By hand of friendship and of love.
I would not wish that rigid Fate
Had doomed thee to a captive's state,
Whose hands are bound by honour's law,
Who wears a sword he must not draw;
But were it so, in minstrel pride
The land together would we ride,
On prancing steeds, like Harpers old,
Bound for the halls of barons bold.
Each lover of the lyre we'd seek,
From Michael's Mount to Skiddaw's peak,
Survey wild Albin's mountain strand,
And roam green Erin's lovely land,
While thou the gentler souls should move,
With lay of pity and of love,
And I, thy mate, in rougher strain,
Would sing of war and warriors slain.
Old England's bards were vanquished then,
And Scotland's vaunted Hawthornden,
And, silenced on Iernian shore,
M'Curtin's harp should charm no more!” —
In lively mood he spoke, to wile
From Wilfrid's woe-worn cheek a smile.

XV.

“But,” said Matilda, “ere thy name,
Good Redmond, gain its destined fame,
Say, wilt thou kindly deign to call
Thy brother minstrel to the hall?
Bid all the household, too, attend,
Each in his rank a humble friend;
I know their faithful hearts will grieve,
When their poor mistress takes her leave;
So let the horn and beaker flow
To mitigate their parting woe.” —
The Harper came: — in youth’s first prime
Himself; in mode of olden time
His garb was fashioned, to express
The ancient English minstrel’s dress,
A seemly gown of Kendal green,
With gorget closed of silver sheen;
His harp in silken scarf was slung,
And by his side an anlace hung.
It seemed some masquer’s quaint array,
For revel or for holiday.

XVI.

He made obeisance, with a free
Yet studied air of courtesy.
Each look and accent, framed to please,
Seemed to affect a playful ease;

His face was of that doubtful kind,
That wins the eye, but not the mind;
Yet harsh it seemed to deem amiss
Of brow so young and smooth as this.
His was the subtle look and sly,
That, spying all, seems nought to spy;
Round all the groupe his glances stole,
Unmarked themselves, to mark the whole,
Yet sunk beneath Matilda's look,
Nor could the eye of Redmond brook.
To the suspicious, or the old,
Subtle and dangerous and bold
Had seemed this self-invited guest;
But young our lovers, — and the rest,
Wrapt in their sorrow and their fear
At parting of their mistress dear,
Tear-blinded to the castle hall,
Came as to bear her funeral pall.

XVII.

All that expression base was gone,
When waked the guest his minstrel tone;
It fled at inspiration's call,
As erst the Daemon fled from Saul.
More noble glance he cast around,
More free-drawn breath inspired the sound,
His pulse beat bolder and more high,
In all the pride of minstrelsy!

Alas! too soon that pride was o'er,
 Sunk with the lay that bade it soar!
 His soul resumed, with habit's chain,
 Its vices wild and follies vain,
 And gave the talent, with him born,
 To be a common curse and scorn.
 Such was the youth whom Rokeby's maid,
 With condescending kindness, prayed
 Here to renew the strain she loved,
 At distance heard and well approved.

XVIII.

S O N G.

THE HARP.

I was a wild and wayward boy,
 My childhood scorned each childish toy;
 Retired from all, reserved and coy,
 To musing prone,
 I wooed my solitary joy,
 My Harp alone.

My youth, with bold Ambition's mood,
 Despised the humble stream and wood
 Where my poor father's cottage stood,
 To fame unknown; —
 What should my soaring views make good?
 My Harp alone.

XVII.

L

Love came with all his frantic fire,
And wild romance of vain desire;
The Baron's daughter heard my lyre,
And praised the tone; —
What could presumptuous hope inspire?
My Harp alone.

At Manhood's touch the bubble burst,
And Manhood's pride the vision curst,
And all that had my folly nursed
Love's sway to own;
Yet spared the spell that lulled me first,
My Harp alone.

Woe came with war, and want with woe;
And it was mine to undergo
Each outrage of the rebel foe: —
Can aught atone
My fields made waste, my cot laid low?
My Harp alone!

Ambition's dreams I've seen depart,
Have rued of penury the smart,
Have felt of love the venom'd dart
When hope was flown;
Yet rests one solace so my heart, —
My Harp alone!

Then, over mountain, moor, and hill,
My faithful harp, I'll bear thee still;
And when this life of want and ill
Is well nigh gone,
Thy strings mine elegy shall thrill,
My Harp alone!

XIX.

"A pleasing lay!" Matilda said,
But Harpool shook his old grey head,
And took his baton and his torch,
To seek his guard-room in the porch.
Edmund observed — with sudden change,
Among the strings his fingers range,
Until they waked a bolder glee
Of military melody;
Then paused amid the martial sound,
And looked with well feigned fear around; —
"None to this noble house belong,"
He said, "that would a minstrel wrong,
Whose fate has been, through good and ill,
To love his Royal Master still,
And, with your honoured leave, would fain
Rejoice you with a loyal strain." —
Then, as assured by sign and look,
The warlike tone again he took;
And Harpool stopped, and turned to hear
A ditty of the Cavalier.

XX.

S O N G.

THE CAVALIER.

While the dawn on the mountain was misty
and gray,

My True Love has mounted his steed and away,
Over hill, over valley, o'er dale and o'er down;
Heaven shield the brave gallant that fights for
the Crown!

He has doffed the silk doublet the breast-plate
to bear,

He has placed the steel cap o'er his long flow-
ing hair,

From his belt to his stirrup his broad-sword
hangs down, —

Heaven shield the brave gallant that fights for
the Crown!

For the rights of fair England that broad-
sword he draws,

Her King is his leader, her Church is his
cause;

His watch-word is honour, his pay is re-
nown, —

God strike with the gallant that strikes for the
Crown!

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Wal-
ler, and all
The round-headed rebels of Westminster-hall;
But tell these bold traitors of London's proud
town,
That the spears of the North have encircled the
Crown.

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread of their
foes;
There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's
Montrose!
Would you match the base Skippon, and Mas-
sey, and Brown,
With the Barons of England that fight for the
Crown?

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier!
Be his banner unconquered, resistless his spear,
Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may
drown,
In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and
her Crown!

XXI.

«Alas!» Matilda said, «that strain,
Good Harper, now is heard in vain!
The time has been, at such a sound,
When Rokeby's vassals gathered round,

An hundred manly hearts would bound;
But now, the stirring verse we hear,
Like trump in dying soldier's ear!
Listless and sad the notes we own,
The power to answer them is flown.
Yet not without his meet applause
Be he that sings the rightful cause,
Even when the crisis of its fate
To human eye seems desperate.
While Rokeby's heir such power retains,
Let this slight guerdon pay thy pains: —
And, lend thy harp; I fain would try,
If my poor skill can aught supply,
Ere yet I leave my fathers' hall,
To mourn the cause in which we fall. —

XXII.

The Harper, with a downcast look,
And trembling hand, her bounty took.
As yet, the conscious pride of art
Had steeled him in his treacherous part;
A powerful spring, of force unguessed,
That hath each gentler mood suppressed,
And reigned in many a human breast;
From his that plans the red campaign,
To his that wastes the woodland reign.
The failing wing, the bloodshot eye,
The sportsman marks with apathy,

Each feeling of his victim's ill
Drowned in his own successful skill.
The veteran, too, who now no more
Aspires to head the battle's roar,
Loves still the triumph of his art,
And traces on the pencilled chart
Some stern invader's destined way,
Through blood and ruin, to his prey;
Patriots to death, and towns to flame,
He dooms, to raise another's name,
And shares the guilt though not the fame.
What pays him for his span of time
Spent in premeditating crime?
What against pity arms his heart? —
It is the conscious pride of art.

XXIII.

But principles in Edmund's mind
Were baseless, vague, and undefined.
His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
On passion's changeful tide was tost;
Nor Vice nor Virtue had the power
Beyond the impression of the hour;
And O! when passion rules, how rare
The hours that fall to Virtue's share!
Yet now she roused her — for the pride,
That lack of sterner guilt supplied,
Could scarce support him when arose
The lay that mourned Matilda's woes.

SONG.

THE FAREWELL.

The sound of Rokeby's woods I hear,

They mingle with the song;

Dark Greta's voice is in mine ear,

I must not hear them long.

From every loved and native haunt

The native heir must stray,

And, like a ghost whom sun-beams daunt,

Must part before the day.

Soon from the halls my fathers reared,

Their scutcheons may descend,

A line so long beloved and feared

May soon obscurely end.

No longer here Matilda's tone

Shall bid these echoes swell,

Yet shall they hear her proudly own

The cause in which we fell.

The Lady paused, and then again

Resumed the lay in loftier strain.

XXIV.

Let our halls and towers decay.

Be our name and line forgot,

Lands and manors pass away, —

We but share our monarch's lot.

If no more our annals show
Battles won and banners taken,
Still in death, defeat, and woe,
Ours be loyalty unshaken!

Constant still in danger's hour,
Princes owned our fathers' aid;
Lands and honours, wealth and power,
Well their loyalty repaid.
Perish wealth, and power, and pride!
Mortal boons by mortals given;
But let Constancy abide,
Constancy's the gift of heaven.

XXV.

While thus Matilda's lay was heard,
A thousand thoughts in Edmund stirred.
In peasant life he might have known
As fair a face, as sweet a tone;
But village notes could ne'er supply
That rich and varied melody,
And ne'er in cottage maid was seen
The easy dignity of mien,
Claiming respect yet waving state,
That marks the daughters of the great.
Yet not, perchance, had these alone
His scheme of purposed guilt o'erthrown;
But, while her energy of mind
Superior rose to griefs combined,

Lending its kindling to her eye,
Giving her form new majesty, —
To Edmund's thought Matilda seemed
The very object he had dreamed,
When long ere guilt his soul had known,
In Winston bowers he mused alone,
Taxing his fancy to combine
The face, the air, the voice divine,
Of princess fair by cruel fate
Reft of her honours, power, and state,
Till to her rightful realm restored
By destined hero's conquering sword.

XXVI.

“Such was my vision!” Edmund thought;
“And have I, then, the ruin wrought
Of such a maid, that fancy ne’er
In fairest vision formed her peer?
Was it my hand, that could uncloset
The postern to her ruthless foes?
Foes, lost to honour, law, and faith,
Their kindest mercy sudden death!
Have I done this? I! who have sworn,
That if the globe such angel bore,
I would have traced its circle broad,
To kiss the ground on which she trod! —
And now — O! would that earth would rive,
And close upon me while alive! —

Is there no hope? is all then lost?
Bertram's already on his post!
Even now, beside the hall's arched door,
I saw his shadow cross the floor!
He was to wait my signal strain —
A little respite thus we gain:
By what I heard the menials say,
Young Wycliffe's troop are on their way —
Alarm precipitates the crime!
My harp must wear away the time." —
And then, in accents faint and low,
He faltered forth a tale of woe.

XXVII.

B A L L A D.

"And whither would you lead me then?"

Quoth the Friar of orders gray;

And the ruffians twain replied again,

"By a dying woman to pray." —

"I see," he said, "a lovely sight,

A sight bodes little harm,

A lady as a lily bright,

With an infant on her arm." —

"Then do thine office, Friar gray,

And see thou shrive her free!

Else shall the sprite, that parts to-night,

Fling all its guilt on thee.

“Let mass be said, and trentals read,
 When thou’rt to convent gone,
 And bid the bell of St Benedict
 Toll out its deepest tone.” —

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
 Blindfolded as he came —
 Next morning, all in Littlecot-hall
 Were weeping for their dame.

Wild Darrell is an altered man,
 The village crones can tell;
 He looks pale as clay, and strives to pray,
 If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell’s way,
 He’ll beard him in his pride —
 If he meet a Friar of orders gray,
 He droops and turns aside.

XXVIII.

“Harper! methinks thy magic lays,”
 Matilda said, “can goblins raise!
 Well nigh my fancy can discern,
 Near the dark porch, a visage stern;
 E’en now in yonder shadowy nook
 I see it! — Redmond, Wilfrid, look! —
 A human form distinct and clear —
 God, for thy mercy! — It draws near!” —

She saw too true. Stride after stride,
The centre of that chamber wide
Fierce Bertram gained; then made a stand,
And, proudly waving with his hand,
Thundered — «Be still, upon your lives!
He bleeds who speaks, he dies who strives.» —
Behind their chief, the robber crew
Forth from the darkened portal drew,
In silence — save that echo dread
Returned their heavy measured tread.
The lamp's uncertain lustre gave
Their arms to gleam, their plumes to wave;
File after file in order pass,
Like forms on Banquo's mystic glass.
Then, halting at their leader's sign,
At once they formed and curved their line,
Hemming within its crescent drear
Their victims, like a herd of deer.
Another sign, and to the aim
Levelled at once their musquets came,
As waiting but their chieftain's word,
To make their fatal volley heard.

XXIX.

Back in a heap the menials drew,
Yet, even in mortal terror, true,
Their pale and startled group oppose
Between Matilda and the foes.

«O haste thee, Wilfrid!» Redmond cried;
 «Undo that wicket by thy side!
 Bear hence Matilda — gain the wood —
 The pass may be a while made good —
 Thy band, ere this, must sure be nigh —
 O speak not — dally not — but fly!»
 While yet the crowd their motions hide,
 Through the low wicket-door they glide.
 Through vaulted passages they wind,
 In Gothic intricacy twined;
 Wilfrid half led, and half he bore,
 Matilda to the postern door,
 And safe beneath the forest-tree
 The lady stands at liberty.
 The moon-beams, the fresh gale's caress,
 Renewed suspended consciousness: —
 «Where's Redmond?» eagerly she cries:
 «Thou answer'st not — he dies! he dies!
 And thou hast left him, all bereft
 Of mortal aid — with murderers left! —
 I know it well — he would not yield
 His sword to man — his doom is sealed!
 For my scorned life, which thou hast bought
 At price of his, I thank thee not,» —

XXX.

The unjust reproach, the angry look,
 The heart of Wilfrid could not brook.

“Lady,” he said, “my band so near,
In safety thou may’st rest thee here.
For Redmond’s death thou shalt not mourn;
If mine can buy his safe return.” —
He turned away — his heart throbbed high,
The tear was bursting from his eye,
The sense of her injustice pressed
Upon the maid’s distracted breast, —
“Stay, Wilfrid, stay! all aid is vain!” —
He heard, but turned him not again;
He reaches now the postern door,
Now enters — and is seen no more.

XXXI.

With all the agony that e’er
Was gendered ’twixt suspense and fear,
She watched the line of windows tall
Whose Gothic lattice lights the hall,
Distinguished by the paly red
The lamps in dim reflection shed,
While all beside in wan moon-light
Each grated casement glimmered white.
No sight of harm, no sound of ill,
It is a deep and midnight still.
Who looked upon the scene had guessed
All in the castle were at rest:
When sudden on the windows shone
A lightning flash, just seen and gone!

A shot is heard — Again the flame
Flashed thick and fast — a volley came!
Then echoed wildly, from within,
Of shout and scream the mingled din,
And weapon-clash, and maddening cry
Of those who kill, and those who die!
As filled the hall with sulphurous smoke,
More red, more dark, the death-flash broke,
And forms were on the lattice cast,
That struck, or struggled, as they past.

XXXII.

What sounds upon the midnight wind
Approach so rapidly behind?
It is, it is, the tramp of steeds!
Matilda hears the sound, she speeds,
Seizes upon the leader's rein —
«O haste to aid, ere aid be vain!
Fly to the postern — gain the hall!» —
From saddle spring the troopers all;
Their gallant steeds, at liberty,
Run wild along the moon-light lea.
But, ere they burst upon the scene,
Full stubborn had the conflict been.
When Bertram marked Matilda's flight,
It gave the signal for the fight;
And Rokeby's veterans, seamed with scars
Of Scotland's and of Erin's wars,

Their momentary panic o'er,
Stood to the arms which then they bore;
(For they were weaponed, and prepared
Their mistress on her way to guard.)
Then cheered them to the fight O'Neale,
Then pealed the shot, and clashed the steel;
The war-smoke soon with sable breath
Darkened the scene of blood and death
While on the few defenders close,
The Bandits with redoubled blows,
And, twice driven back, yet fierce and fell
Renew the charge with frantic yell.

XXXIII.

Wilfrid has fallen — but o'er him stood
Young Redmond, soiled with smoke and blood,
Cheering his mates, with heart and hand
Still to make good their desperate stand.
“Up, comrades, up! in Rokeby halls
Ne'er be it said our courage falls.
What! faint ye for their savage cry,
Or do the smoke-wreaths daunt your eye?
These rafters have returned a shout
As loud at Rokeby's wassail route,
As thick a smoke these hearths have given
At Hallowtide or Christmas even.
Stand to it yet! renew the fight,
For Rokeby's and Matilda's right!

XVII.

M

These slaves! they dare not, hand to hand,
Bide buffet from a true man's brand." —
Impetuous, active, fierce, and young,
Upon the advancing foes he sprung.
Woe to the wretch at whom is bent
His brandished faulchion's sheer descent!
Backward they scattered as he came,
Like wolves before the levin flame,
When, 'mid their howling conclave driven,
Hath glanced the thunderbolt of heaven.
Bertram rushed on — but Harpool clasped
His knees, although in death he gasped
His falling corpse before him flung,
And round the trammelled ruffian clung.
Just then, the soldiers filled the dome,
And, shouting, charged the felons home
So fiercely; that, in panic dread,
They broke, they yielded, fell, or fled.
Bertram's stern voice they heed no more,
Though heard above the battle's roar,
While, trampling down the dying man,
He strove, with vollied threat and ban,
In scorn of odds, in fate's despite,
To rally up the desperate fight.

XXXIV.

Soon murkier clouds the hall enfold,
Than e'er from battle-thunders rolled;

So dense, the combatants scarce know
To aim or to avoid the blow.
Smothering and blindfold grows the fight —
But soon shall dawn a dismal light!
'Mid cries, and clashing arms, there came
The hollow sound of rushing flame;
New horrors on the tumult dire
Arise — the castle is on fire!
Doubtful, if chance had cast the brand,
Or frantic Bertram's desperate hand.
Matilda saw — for frequent broke
From the dim casements gusts of smoke.
Yon tower, which late so clear defined
On the fair hemisphere reclined,
That, pencilled on its azure pure,
The eye could count each embrasure,
Now, swathed within the sweeping cloud,
Seems giant-spectre in his shroud;
Till, from each loop-hole flashing light,
A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
And, gathering to united glare,
Streams high into the midnight air;
A dismal beacon, far and wide
That wakened Greta's slumbering side.
Soon all beneath, through gallery long,
And pendent arch, the fire flashed strong,
Snatching whatever could maintain,
Raise, or extend, its furious reign,
Startling, with closer cause of dread,
The females who the conflict fled,

And now rushed forth upon the plain,
Filling the air with clamours vain.

XXXV.

But ceased not yet, the hall within,
The shriek, the shout, the carnage-din,
Till bursting lattices give proof
The flames have caught the raftered roof.
What! wait they till its beams amain
Crash on the slayers and the slain?
The alarm is caught — the draw-bridge falls,
The warriors hurry from the walls,
But, by the conflagration's light,
Upon the lawn renew the fight.
Each straggling felon down was hewed,
Not one could gain the sheltering wood;
But forth the affrighted Harper sprung,
And to Matilda's robe he clung.
Her shriek, entreaty, and command,
Stopped the pursuer's lifted hand.
Denzil and he alive were ta'en;
The rest, save Bertram, all are slain.

XXXVI.

And where is Bertram? — Soaring high,
The general flame ascends the sky;
In gathered group the soldiers gaze
Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
When, like infernal dæmon, sent
Red from his penal element,

To plague and to pollute the air, —
His face all gore, on fire his hair,
Forth from the central mass of smoke
The giant form of Bertram broke!
His brandished sword on high he rears,
Then plunged among opposing spears;
Round his left arm his mantle trussed,
Received and foiled three lances' thrust;
Nor these his headlong course withstood,
Like reeds he snapped the tough ash wood.
In vain his foes around him clung;
With matchless force aside he flung
Their boldest, — as the bull, at bay,
Tosses the ban-dogs from his way.
Through forty foes his path he made,
And safely gained the forest glade.

XXXVII.

Scarce was this final conflict o'er,
When from the postern Redmond bore
Wilfrid, who, as of life bereft,
Had in the fatal hall been left,
Deserted there by all his train;
But Redmond saw, and turned again. —
Beneath an oak he laid him down,
That in the blaze gleamed ruddy brown,
And then his mantle's clasp undid,
Matilda held his drooping head,
Till, given to breathe the freer air,
Returning life repaid their care.

He gazed on them with heavy sigh, —
“I could have wished even thus to die!” —
No more he said — for now with speed
Each trooper had regained his steed;
The ready palfreys stood arrayed,
For Redmond and for Rokeby's Maid;
Two Wilfrid on his horse sustain,
One leads his charger by the rein.
But oft Matilda looked behind,
As up the vale of Tees they wind,
Where far the mansion of her sires
Beaconed the dale with midnight fires.
In gloomy arch above them spread,
The clouded heaven lowered bloody red;
Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
Appeared to roll in waves of blood.
Then, one by one, was heard to fall
The tower, the donjon-keep, the hall.
Each rushing down with thunder sound,
A space the conflagration drowned;
Till, gathering strength, again it rose,
Announced its triumph in its close,
Shook wide its light the landscape o'er,
Then sunk — and Rokeby was no more!

END OF CANTO FIFTH.

ROKBY.

CANTO SIXTH.

The summer sun, with golden gleams,
Was wont to gild Matilda's tresses,
And crown her locks with radiant beams;
Her eyes, like stars, did light her face;
That morning sun had shone on her,
The flowers within her bosom grew,
But now no more her cheeks were red
From fair Matilda's blushes;
That morning sun had shone on her,
On Rokby's glades of elm and oak,
But, rising from their slumber,
Marked no grey tresses growing
A moping maid, so low and woe,
That, living in the morning shower,
Can but with trembling vapour pay
The early visit of remembrance;
The peasant, to his labour bound,
Pines to view the blanching maid.

R O K E B Y.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

THE summer sun, whose early power
Was wont to gild Matilda's bower,
And rouse her with his matin ray
Her duteous orisons to pay,
That morning sun has three times seen
The flowers unfold on Rokeby green,
But sees no more the slumbers fly
From fair Matilda's hazel eye;
That morning sun has three times broke
On Rokeby's glades of elm and oak,
But, rising from their sylvan screen,
Marks no gray turrets glance between.
A shapeless mass lie keep and tower,
That, hissing to the morning shower,
Can but with smouldering vapour pay
The early smile of summer day.
The peasant, to his labour bound,
Pauses to view the blackened mound,

Striving, amid the ruined space,
Each well-remembered spot to trace.
That length of frail and fire-scorched wall
Once screened the hospitable hall;
When yonder broken arch was whole,
'Twas there was dealt the weekly dole;
And where yon tottering columns nod,
The chapel sent the hymn to God.
So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.
The towers must share the builder's doom;
Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb:
But better boon benignant Heaven
To Faith and Charity has given,
And bids the Christian hope sublime
Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.

II.

Now the third night of summer came,
Since that which witnessed Rokeby's flame:
On Brignal cliffs and Scargill brake
The owlet's homilies awake,
The bittern screamed from rush and flag,
The raven slumbered on his crag,
Forth from his den the otter drew, —
Grayling and trout their tyrant knew,

As between reed and sedge he peers,
With fierce round snout and sharpened ears,
Or, prowling by the moon-beam cool,
Watches the stream or swims the pool; —
Perched on his wonted eyrie high,
Sleep sealed the tercelet's wearied eye,
That all the day had watched so well
The cushat dart across the dell.
In dubious beam reflected shone
That lofty cliff of pale grey stone,
Beside whose base the secret cave
To rapine late a refuge gave.
The crag's wild crest of copse and yew
On Greta's breast dark shadows threw;
Shadows that met or shunn'd the sight,
With every change of fitful light;
As hope and fear alternate chase
Our course through life's uncertain race.

III.

Gliding by crag and copse-wood green,
A solitary Form was seen
To trace with stealthy pace the wold,
Like fox that seeks the midnight fold,
And pauses oft, and cowers dismayed,
At every breath that stirs the shade.
He passes now the ivy bush, —
The owl has seen him and is hush;

He passes now the doddered oak, —
Ye heard the startled raven croak;
Lower and lower he descends,
Rustle the leaves, the brush-wood bends;
The otter hears him tread the shore,
And dives, and is beheld no more;
And by the cliff of pale grey stone
The midnight wanderer stands alone.
Methinks, that by the moon we trace
A well-remembered form and face!
That stripling shape, that cheek so pale,
Combine to tell a rueful tale,
Of powers misused, of passion's force,
Of guilt, of grief, and of remorse!
'Tis Edmund's eye, at every sound
That flings that guilty glance around;
'Tis Edmund's trembling haste divides
The brush-wood that the cavern hides,
And, when its narrow porch lies bare,
'Tis Edmund's form that enters there.

IV.

His flint and steel have sparkled bright,
A lamp hath lent the cavern light.
Fearful and quick his eye surveys
Each angle of the gloomy maze.
Since last he left that stern abode,
It seemed as none its floor had trode;

Untouched appear'd the various spoil,
The purchase of his comrades' toil;
Masques and disguises grimed with mud,
Arms broken and defiled with blood,
And all the nameless tools that aid
Night-felons in their lawless trade,
Upon the gloomy walls were hung,
Or lay in nooks obscurely flung.
Still on the sordid board appear
The reliques of the noontide cheer;
Flaggons and emptied flasks were there,
And bench o'erthrown, and shattered chair;
And all around the semblance showed,
As when the final revel glowed,
When the red sun was setting fast,
And parting pledge Guy Denzil past.
To Rokeby treasure-vaults! they quaffed,
And shouted loud and wildly laughed,
Poured maddening from the rocky door,
And parted — to return no more!
They found in Rokeby vaults their doom, —
A bloody death, a burning tomb.

V.

There his own peasant dress he spies,
Doffed to assume that quaint disguise,
And shuddering thought upon his glee,
When pranked in garb of minstrelsy.

“O be the fatal art accurst,”
He cried, “that moved my folly first,
Till, bribed by bandits’ base applause,
I burst through God’s and Nature’s laws!
Three summer days are scanty past
Since I have trod this cavern last,
A thoughtless wretch, and prompt to err —
But O as yet no murderer!
Even now I list my comrades’ cheer,
That general laughe is in mine ear,
Which raised my pulse and steeled my heart,
As I rehearsed my treacherous part —
And would that all since then could seem
The phantom of a fever’s dream!
But fatal Memory notes too well
The horrors of the dying yell,
From my despairing mates that broke,
When flashed the fire and rolled the smoke,
When the avengers shouting came,
And hemmed us ’twixt the sword and flame!
My frantic flight, — the lifted brand —
That angel’s interposing hand! —
If for my life from slaughter freed,
I yet could pay some grateful meed!
Perchance this object of my quest
May aid” — he turned, nor spoke the rest.

VI.

Due northward from the rugged hearth,
With paces five he metes the earth,

Then toiled with mattock to explore
The entrails of the cavern floor,
Nor paused till, deep beneath the ground,
His search a small steel casket found,
Just as he stooped to loose its hasp,
His shoulder felt a giant grasp;
He started, and looked up aghast,
Then shrieked — 'twas Bertram held him fast.
"Fear not!" he said; but who could hear
That deep stern voice, and cease to fear?
"Fear not! — by heaven he shakes as much
As partridge in the falcon's clutch!" —
He raised him, and unloosed his hold,
While from the opening casket rolled
A chain and reliquaire of gold.
Bertram beheld it with surprise,
Gazed on its fashion and device,
Then, cheering Edmund as he could,
Somewhat he smoothed his rugged mood;
For still the youth's half-lifted eye
Quivered with terror's agony,
And sidelong glanced, as to explore,
In meditated flight, the door.
"Sit," Bertram said, "from danger free;
Thou canst not, and thou shalt not, flee.
Chance brings me hither; hill and plain
I've sought for refuge-place in vain.
And tell me now, thou aguish boy,
What makest thou here? what means this toy

Denzil and thou, I marked, were ta'en;
What lucky chance unbound your chain?
I deemed, long since on Baliol's tower,
Your heads were warped with sun and shower.
Tell me the whole — and mark! nought e'er
Chafes me like falsehood, or like fear." —
Gathering his courage to his aid,
But trembling still, the youth obeyed.

VII.

„Denzil and I two nights passed o'er,
In fetters on the dungeon floor.
A guest the third sad morrow brought,
Our hold dark Oswald Wycliffe sought,
And eyed my comrade long askance,
With fixed and penetrating glance.
'Guy Denzil art thou called?' — 'The same.' —
'At court who served wild Buckingham;
Thence banish'd, won a heeper's place,
So Villiers willed, in Marwood-chase;
That lost — I need not tell thee why —
Thou madest thy wit thy wants supply,
Then fought for Rokeby: — have I guessed
My prisoner right?' — 'At thy behest.' —
He paused awhile, and then went on
With low and confidential tone;
Me, as I judge, not then he saw,
Close nestled in my couch of straw. —
'List to me, Guy. Thou knowst the great
Have frequent need of what they hate;

Hence, in their favour oft we see
 Unscrupled, useful men like thee.
 Were I disposed to bid thee live,
 What pledge of faith hast thou to give? —

VIII.

“The ready fiend, who never yet
 Hath failed to sharpen Denzil’s wit,
 Prompted his lie — ‘His only child
 Should rest his pledge.’ — The Baron smiled,
 And turned to me — ‘Thou art his son?’
 I bowed — our fetters were undone,
 And we were led to hear apart
 A dreadful lesson of his art.
 Wilfrid, he said, his heir and son,
 Had fair Matilda’s favour won;
 And long since had their union been,
 But for her father’s bigot spleen,
 Whose brute and blindfold party-rage
 Would, force per force, her hand engage
 To a base kern of Irish earth,
 Unknown his lineage and his birth,
 Save that a dying ruffian bore
 The infant brat to Rokeby door.
 Gentle restraint, he said, would lead
 Old Rokeby to enlarge his creed;
 But fair occasion he must find
 For such restraint well-meant and kind,

XVII.

The knight being rendered to his charge
But as a prisoner at large.

IX.

“He school’d us in a well-forged tale,
Of scheme the castle walls to scale,
To which was leagued each cavalier,
That dwells upon the Tyne and Wear,
That Rokeby, his parole forgot,
Had dealt with us to aid the plot.
Such was the charge; which Denzil’s zeal
Of hate to Rokeby and O’Neale
Proffered, as witness, to make good,
Even though the forfeit were their blood.
I scrupled until o’er and o’er
His prisoners’ safety Wycliffe swore;
And then — alas! what needs there more?
I knew I should not live to say
The proffer I refused that day;
Ashamed to live, yet loth to die,
I soiled me with their infamy!” —
“Poor youth,” said Bertram, “wavering still,
Unfit alike for good or ill!
But what fell next?” — “Soon as at large
Was scrolled and signed our fatal charge,
There never yet, on tragic stage,
Was seen so well a painted rage
As Oswald’s shewed! With loud alarm
He called his garrison to arm;

From tower to tower, from post to post,
He hurried as if all were lost;
Consigned to dungeon and to chain
The good old knight and all his train,
Warned each suspected cavalier,
Within his limits, to appear
To-morrow, at the hour of noon,
In the high church of Eglistone." —

X.

"Of Eglistone! Even now I passed,"
Said Bertram, "as the night closed fast;
Torches and cressets gleamed around,
I heard the saw and hammer sound,
And I could mark they toiled to raise
A scaffold, hung with sable baize,
Which the grim headsman's scene displayed,
Block, axe, and saw-dust ready laid.
Some evil deed will there be done,
Unless Matilda wed his son; —
She loves him not — 'tis shrewdly guessed
That Redmond rules the damsel's breast.
This is a turn of Oswald's skill!
But I may meet, and foil him still! —
How camest thou to thy freedom?" — "There
Lies mystery more dark and rare.
In midst of Wycliffe's well-feign'd rage,
A scroll was offered by a page,

Who told, a muffled horseman late
Had left it at the castle-gate.
He broke the seal — his cheek shewed change,
Sudden, portentous, wild, and strange;
The mimic passion of his eye
Was turned to actual agony,
His hand like summer sapling shook,
Terror and guilt were in his look.
Denzil he judged, in time of need,
Fit counsellor for evil deed,
And thus apart his counsel broke,
While with a ghastly smile he spoke.

XI.

«As in the pageants of the stage,
The dead awake in this wild age,
Mortham — whom all men deemed decreed
In his own deadly snare to bleed,
Slain by a bravo, whom o'er sea,
He trained to aid in murdering me, —
Mortham has 'scaped; the coward shot
The steed, but harmed the ride nought.» —
Here, with an execration fell,
Bertram leaped up, and paced the cell; —
«Thine own grey head, or bosom dark,»
He muttered, «may be surer mark!» —
Then sate, and signed to Edmund, pale
With terror, to resume his tale.

«Wycliffe went on: — 'Mark with what flights
Of wildered reverie he writes:

THE LETTER.

«Ruler of Mortham's destiny!
Though dead, thy victim lives to thee.
Once had he all that binds to life,
A lovely child, a lovelier wife;
Wealth, fame, and friendship, were his own —
Thou gavest the word, and they are flown.
Mark how he pays thee: — to thy hand
He yields his honours and his land,
One boon premised; — Restore his child!
And, from his native land exiled,
Mortham no more returns to claim
His lands, his honours, or his name;
Refuse him this, and from the slain
Thou shalt see Mortham rise again.» —

XII.

«This billet while the Baron read,
His faltering accents shewed his dread;
He pressed his forehead with his palm,
Then took a scornful tone and calm;
'Wild as the winds, as billows wild!
What wot I of his spouse or child?
Hither he brought a joyous dame,
Unknown her lineage or her name:

Her, in some frantic fit, he slew;
 The nurse and child in fear withdrew.
 Heaven be my witness, wist I where
 To find this youth, my kinsman's heir, —
 Unguerdoned, I would give with joy
 The father's arms to fold his boy,
 And Mortham's lands and towers resign
 To the just heir of Mortham's line.' —
 Thou knowest that scarcely e'en his fear
 Suppresses Denzil's cynic sneer; —
 'Then happy is thy vassal's part,'
 He said, 'to ease his patron's heart!
 In thine own jailor's watchful care
 Lies Mortham's just and rightful heir;
 Thy generous wish is fully won, —
 Redmond O'Neale is Mortham's son.' —

XIII.

«Up starting with a frenzied look,
 His clenched hand the Baron shook:
 «Is Hell at work? or dost thou rave,
 Or darest thou palter with me, slave!
 Perchance thou wot'st not, Barnard's towers
 Have racks, of strange and ghastly powers.' —
 Denzil, who well his safety knew,
 Firmly rejoin'd, 'I tell thee true.
 Thy racks could give thee but to know
 The proofs, which I, untortured, show. —

It chanced upon a winter night,
When early snow made Stanmore white,
That very night, when first of all
Redmond O'Neale saw Rokeby-hall,
It was my goodly lot to gain
A reliquary and a chain,
Twisted and chased of massive gold.
— Demand not how the prize I hold;
It was not given, nor lent, or sold. —
Gilt tablets to the chain were hung,
With letters in the Irish tongue.
I hid my spoil, for there was need
That I should leave the land with speed;
Nor then I deemed it safe to bear
On mine own person gems so rare.
Small heed I of the tablets took,
But since have spelled them by the book,
When some sojourn in Erin's land
Of their wild speech had given command.
But darkling was the sense; the phrase
And language those of other days,
Involved of purpose, as to foil
An interloper's prying toil.
The words, but not the sense, I knew,
Till fortune gave the guiding clue.

XIV.

«Three days since, was that clue revealed,
In Thorsgill as I lay concealed,
And heard at full when Rokeby's Maid
Her uncle's history displayed;
And now I can interpret well
Each syllable the tablets tell.
Mark then: Fair Edith was the joy
Of old O'Neale of Clandeboy,
But from her sire and country fled,
In secret Mortham's Lord to wed.
O'Neale, his first resentment o'er,
Dispatched his son to Greta's shore,
Enjoining he should make him known
(Until his farther will were shown,
To Edith, but to her alone.
What of their ill-starred meeting fell,
Lord Wicliffe knows, and none so well.

XV.

«O'Neale it was, who, in despair,
Robbed Mortham of his infant heir;
He bred him in their nurture wild,
And called him murdered Connal's child.
Soon died the nurse; the clan believed
What from their chieftain they received.
His purpose was that ne'er again
The boy should cross the Irish main,

But, like his mountain sires, enjoy
The woods and wastes of Clandeboy.
Then on the land wild troubles came,
And stronger chieftains urged a claim,
And wrested from the old man's hands.
His native towers, his father's lands.
Unable then, amid the strife,
To guard young Redmond's rights or life
Late and reluctant he restores
The infant to his native shores,
With goodly gifts and letters stored,
With many a deep conjuring word,
To Mortham, and to Rokeby's Lord.
Nought knew the clod of Irish earth,
Who was the guide, of Redmond's birth;
But deemed his chief's commands were laid
On both, by both to be obeyed.
How he was wounded by the way,
I need not, and I list not say." —

XVI.

"A wond'rous tale! and grant it true,
'What,' Wycliffe answered, 'might I do?
Heaven knows, as willingly as now
I raise the bonnet from my brow,
Would I my kinsman's manors fair
Restore to Mortham, or his heir;

But Mortham is distraught — O'Neale
Has drawn for tyranny his steel,
Malignant to our rightful Cause,
And trained in Rome's delusive laws.
Hark thee apart! — They whispered long,
Till Denzil's voice grew bold and strong: —
'My proofs! I never will,' he said,
'Shew mortal man where they are laid.
Nor hope discovery to foreclose,
By giving me to feed the crows;
For I have mates at large, who know
Where I am wont such toys to stow.
Free me from peril and from band,
These tablets are at thy command;
Nor were it hard to form some train,
To wile old Mortham o'er the main.
Then, lunatic's nor papist's hand
Should wrest from thine the goodly land.' —
— 'I like thy wit,' said Wycliffe, 'well;
But here in hostage shalt thou dwell.
Thy son, unless my purpose err,
May prove the trustier messenger.
A scroll to Mortham shall he bear
From me, and fetch these tokens rare.
Gold shalt thou have, and that good store,
And freedom, his commission o'er;
But if his faith should chance to fail,
The gibbet frees thee from the jail.' —

XVII.

«Mesh'd in the net himself had twined,
What subterfuge could Denzil find?
He told me, with reluctant sigh,
That hidden here the tokens lie;
Conjured my swift return and aid,
By all he scoffed and disobeyed,
And looked as if the noose were tied,
And I the priest who left his side.
This scroll for Mortham, Wycliffe gave,
Whom I must seek by Greta's wave,
Or in the hut where chief he hides,
Where Thorsgill's forester resides.
(Thence chanced it, wandering in the glade,
That he descried our ambushade.)
I was dismissed as evening fell,
And reached but now this rocky cell.» —
«Give Oswald's letter.» — Bertram read,
And tore it fiercely, shred by shred: —
«All lies and villainy! to blind
His noble kinsman's generous mind,
And train him on from day to day,
Till he can take his life away. —
And now, declare thy purpose, youth,
Nor dare to answer, save the truth;
If aught I mark of Denzil's art,
I'll tear the secret from thy heart!» —

XVIII.

“It needs not. I renounce,” he said,
“My tutor and his deadly trade.
Fixed was my purpose to declare
To Mortham, Redmond is his heir;
To tell him in what risk he stands,
And yield these tokens to his hands.
Fixed was my purpose to atone,
Far as I may, the evil done;
And fixed it rests — if I survive
This night, and leave this cave alive.” —
“And Denzil?” — “Let them ply the rack!
Even till his joints and sinews crack!
If Oswald tear him limb from limb,
What ruth can Denzil claim from him,
Whose thoughtless youth he led astray,
And damned to this unhallowed way?
He schooled me, faith and vows were vain;
Now let my master reap his gain.” —
“True,” answered Bertram, “’tis his meed;
There’s retribution in the deed.
But thou — thou art not for our course,
Hast fear, hast pity, hast remorse;
And he, with us the gale who braves,
Must heave such cargo to the waves,
Or lag with overloaded prore
While barks unburthened reach the shore.” —

XIX.

He paused, and, stretching him at length,
Seemed to repose his bulky strength.
Communing with his secret mind,
As half he sate, and half reclined,
One ample hand his forehead pressed,
And one was dropped across his breast.
The shaggy eye-brows deeper came
Above his eyes of swarthy flame;
His lip of pride awhile forbore
The haughty curve till then it wore;
The unaltered fierceness of his look
A shade of darkened sadness took, —
For dark and sad a presage pressed
Resistlessly on Bertram's breast, —
And when he spoke, his wonted tone,
So fierce, abrupt, and brief, was gone.
His voice was steady, low, and deep,
Like distant waves when breezes sleep;
And sorrow mixed with Edmundes fear,
Its low unbroken depth to hear.

XX.

“Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
The woe that warped my patron's mind;
'Twould wake the fountains of the eye
In other men, but mine are dry.

Mortham must never see the fool,
That sold himself base Wycliffe's tool;
Yet less from thirst of sordid gain,
Than to avenge supposed disdain.
Say, Bertram rues his fault; — a word,
Till now, from Bertram never heard:
Say, too, that Mortham's lord he prays
To think but on their former days;
On Quariana's beach and rock,
On Cayo's bursting battle-shock,
On Darien's sands and deadly dew,
And on the dart Tlatzeca threw; —
Perchance my patron yet may hear
More than may grace his comrade's bier.
My soul hath felt a secret weight,
A warning of approaching fate:
A priest had said, Return, repent!
As well to bid that rock be rent.
Firm as that flint I face mine end;
My heart may burst, but cannot bend.

XXI.

«The dawning of my youth, with awe
And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw;
For over Redesdale it came,
As bodeful as their beacon-flame.
Edmund, thy years were scarcely mine,
When, challenging the clans of Tyne

To bring their best my brand to prove,
O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove;
But Tynedale, nor in tower nor town,
Held champion meet to take it down.
My noontide India may declare;
Like her fierce Sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
Her natives, from mine angry eye.
Panama's maids shall long look pale
When Risingham inspires the tale;
Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
The froward child with Bertram's name.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve of tropic Sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once — and all is night.

XXII.

«Now to thy mission, Edmund. Fly,
Seek Mortham out, and bid him hie
To Richmond, where his troops are laid,
And lead his force to Redmond's aid.
Say, till he reaches Eglistone,
A friend will watch to guard his son.

Now, fare thee well; for night draws on,
And I would rest me here alone." —
Despite his ill-dissembled fear,
There swam in Edmund's eye a tear;
A tribute to the courage high,
Which stooped not in extremity,
But strove, irregularly great,
To triumph o'er approaching fate!
Bertram beheld the dew-drop start,
It almost touched his iron heart: —
"I did not think there lived," he said,
"One, who would tear for Bertram shed." —
He loosened then his baldrick's hold,
A buckle broad of massive gold; —
"Of all the spoil that paid his pains,
But this with Risingham remains;
And this, dear Edmund, thou shalt take,
And wear it long for Bertram's sake.
Once more — to Mortham speed amain;
Farewell! and turn thee not again." —

XXIII.

The night has yielded to the morn,
And far the hours of prime are worn.
Oswald, who, since the dawn of day,
Had cursed his messenger's delay,
Impatient questioned now his train,
"Was Denzil's son returned again?" —

It chanced there answered of the crew,
 A menial, who young Edmund knew;
 "No son of Denzil this," he said;
 "A peasant boy from Winston glade,
 For song and minstrelsy renowned,
 And knavish pranks, the hamlets round." —
 — "Not Denzils son! — from Winston vale! —
 Then it was false, that specious tale;
 Or, worse — he hath dispatched the youth
 To show to Mortham's lord its truth.
 Fool that I was! — but 'tis too late; —
 This is the very turn of fate! —
 The tale, or true or false, relies
 On Denzil's evidence: — He dies! —
 — Ho! Provost Martial! instantly
 Lead Denzil to the gallows tree!
 Allow him not a parting word;
 Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!
 Then let his gory head appal
 Marauders from the castle-wall.
 Lead forth thy guard, that duty done,
 With best dispatch to Eglistone. —
 — Basil, tell Wilfrid he must straight
 Attend me at the castle-gate." —

XXIV.

„Alas!" the old domestic said,
 And shook his venerable head,

XVII.

O

«Alas, my Lord! full ill to-day
May my young master brook the way!
The leech has spoke with grave alarm,
Of unseen hurt, of secret harm,
Of sorrow lurking at the heart,
That mars and lets his healing art.» —
— «Tush, tell not me! — Romantic boys
Pine themselves sick for airy toys.
In will find cure for Wilfrid soon;
Bid him for Eglistone be boune,
And quick — I hear the dull death-drum
Tell Denzil's hour of fate is come.» —
He paused with scornful smile, and then
Resumed his train of thought agen.
«Now comes my fortune's crisis near!
Entreaty boots not — instant fear,
Nought else, can bend Matildas pride,
Or win her to be Wilfrid's bride.
But when she sees the scaffold placed,
With axe and block and headsman graced,
And when she deems, that to deny
Dooms Redmond and her sire to die,
She must give way. — Then, were the line
Of Rokeby once combined with mine,
I gain the weather-gage of fate!
If Mortham come, he comes too late,
While I, allied thus and prepared,
Bid him defiance to his beard. —

— If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
To drop the axe? — soft! pause we there.
Mortham still lives — yon youth may tell
His tale — and Fairfax loves him well; —
Else, wherefore should I now delay
To sweep this Redmond from my way? —
But she to piety perforce
Must yield. — Without there! Sound to horse.” —

XXV.

’Twas bustle in the court below! —
“Mount, and march forward!” — forth they go;
Steeds neigh and trample all around,
Steel rings, spears glimmer, trumpets sound. —
Just then was sung his parting hymn;
And Denzil turned his eye-balls dim,
And scarcely conscious what he sees,
Follows the horsemen down the Tees,
And scarcely conscious what he hears,
The trumpets tingle in his ears.
O’er the long bridge they’re sweeping now,
The van is hid by green-wood bough;
But ere the rearward had passed o’er,
Guy Denzil heard and saw no more!
One stroke, up the castle bell,
To Oswald rung his dying knell.

XXVI.

O for that pencil, erst profuse
Of chivalry's emblazoned hues,
That traced of old, in Woodstock bower,
The pageant of the Leaf and Flower,
And bodied forth the tourney high,
Held for the hand of Emily!
Then might I paint the tumult broad,
That to the crowded abbey flowed,
And poured, as with an ocean's sound,
Into the church's ample bound!
Then might I shew each varying mien,
Exulting, woeful, or serene;
Indifference with his idiot stare,
And Sympathy with anxious air;
Paint the dejected Cavalier,
Doubtful, disarmed, and sad of cheer;
And his proud foe, whose formal eye
Claimed conquest now and mastery;
And the brute crowd, whose envious zeal
Huzzas each turn of Fortune's wheel,
And loudest shouts when lowest lie
Exalted worth and station high.
Yet what may such a wish avail?
'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
Hurrying, as best I can, along,
The hearers and the hasty song; —
Like traveller when approaching home,
Who sees the shades of evening come,

And must not now his course delay,
Or chuse the fair, but winding way;
Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
Where o'er his head the wildings bend,
To bless the breeze that cools his brow,
Or snatch a blossom from the bough.

XXVII.

The reverend pile lay wild and waste,
Profaned, dishonoured, and defaced.
Through storied lattices no more
In softened light the sun-beams pour,
Gilding the Gothic sculpture rich
Of shrine, and monument, and niche.
The Civil fury of the time
Made sport of sacrilegious crime;
For dark Fanaticism rent
Altar, and screen, and ornament,
And peasant hands the tombs o'erthrew
Of Bowes, of Rokeby, and Fitz Hugh.
And now was seen unwonted sight,
In holy walls a scaffold dight!
Where once the priest, of grace divine
Dealt to his flock the mystic sign,
There stood the block displayed, and there
The headsman grim his hatchet bare;
And for the word of Hope and Faith,
Resounded loud a doom of death.

Thrice the fierce trumpet's breath was heard,
And echoed thrice the herald's word,
Dooming, for breach of martial laws,
And treason to the Commons' cause,
The Knight of Rokeby and O'Neale
To stoop their heads to block and steel.
The trumpets flourished high and shrill,
Then was a silence dead and still;
And silent prayers to heaven were cast,
And stifled sobs were bursting fast,
Till from the crowd begun to rise
Murmurs of sorrow or surprise,
And from the distant aisles there came
Deep-muttered threats, with Wycliffe's name.

XXVIII.

But Oswald, guarded by his band,
Powerful in evil, waved his hand,
And bade Sedition's voice be dead,
On peril of the murmurer's head.
Then first his glance sought Rokeby's Knight;
Who gazed on the tremendous sight,
As calm as if he came a guest
To kindred Baron's feudal feast,
As calm as if that trumpet-call
Were summons to the bannered hall,
Firm in his loyalty he stood,
And prompt to seal it with his blood.

With downcast look drew Oswald nigh, —
He durst not cope with Rokeby's eye! —
And said, with low and faltering breath,
"Thou knowest the terms of life and death." —
The Knight then turned, and sternly smiled;
"The maiden is mine only child,
Yet shall my blessing leave her head,
If with a traitor's son she wed" —
Then Redmond spoke; "The life of one
Might thy malignity atone,
On me be flung a double guilt!
Spare Rokeby's blood, let mine be spilt!" —
Wycliffe had listened to his suit,
But dread prevailed, and he was mute.

XXIX.

And now he pours his choice of fear
In secret on Matilda's ear;
"An union formed with me and mine,
Ensures the faith of Rokeby's line.
Consent, and all this dread array
Like morning dream shall pass away;
Refuse, and, by my duty pressed,
I give the word — thou knowest the rest." —
Matilda, still and motionless,
With terror heard the dread address,
Pale as the sheeted maid who dies
To hopeless love a sacrifice;

Then wrung her hand in agony,
And round her cast bewildered eye,
Now on the scaffold glanced, and now
On Wycliffe's unrelenting brow.
She veiled her face, and, with a voice
Scarce audible, — «I make my choice!
Spare but their lives! — for aught beside,
Let Wilfrid's doom my fate decide.
He once was generous!» — As she spoke,
Dark Wycliffe's joy in triumph broke: —
«Wilfrid, where loitered ye so late? —
Why upon Basil rest thy weight? —
Art spell-bound by enchanter's wand? —
Kneel, kneel, and take her yielded hand;
Thank her with raptures, simple boy!
Should tears and trembling speak thy joy? —
„O hush, my sire! to prayer and tear
Of mine thou hast refused thine ear;
But now the awful hour draws on,
When truth must speak in loftier tone.” —

XXX.

He took Matilda's hand: — «Dear maid!
Couldst thou so injure me,” he said,
«Of thy poor friend so basely deem,
As blend him with this barbarous scheme?
Alas! my efforts, made in vain,
Might well have saved this added pain.

But now, bear witness earth and heaven,
That ne'er was hope to mortal given,
So twisted with the strings of life,
As this — to call Matilda wife!
I bid it now for ever part,
And with the effort bursts my heart." —
His feeble frame was worn so low,
With wounds, with watching, and with wee,
That nature could no more sustain
The agony of mental pain.
He kneeled — his lip her hand had pressed, —
Just then he felt the stern arrest!
Lower and lower sunk his head, —
They raised him, — but the life was fled!
Then first alarmed, his sire and train
Tried every aid, but tried in vain.
The soul, too soft its ills to bear,
Had left our mortal hemisphere,
And sought in better world the meed,
To blameless life by Heaven decreed."

XXXI.

The wretched sire beheld, aghast,
With Wilfrid all his projects past.
All turned and centered on his son,
On Wilfrid all — and he was gone.
"And I am childless now," he said,
"Childless, through that relentless maid!"

A lifetime's arts, in vain essay'd,
 Are bursting on their artist's head! —
 Here lies my Wilfrid dead — and there
 Comes hated Mortham for his heir,
 Eager to knit in happy band
 With Rokeby's heiress Redmond's hand.
 And shall their triumph soar o'er all
 The schemes deep-laid to work their fall?
 No! — deeds, which prudence might not dare,
 Appal not vengeance and despair.
 The murderess weeps upon his bier —
 I'll change to real that feigned tear!
 They all shall share destruction's shock; —
 Ho! lead the captives to the block!" —
 But ill his provost could divine
 His feelings, and forbore the sign.
 "Slave! to the block! — or I, or they,
 Shall face the judgment-seat this day!" —

XXXII.

The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
 Like horse's hoof on hardened ground;
 Nearer it came, and yet more near, —
 The very deaths-men paused to hear.
 'Tis in the church-yard now — the tread
 Hath waked the dwelling of the dead!
 Fresh sod, and old sepulchral stone,
 Return the tramp in varied tone.

All eyes upon the gate-way hung,
 When through the Gothic arch there sprung
 A Horseman armed, at headlong speed —
 Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed.
 Fire from the flinty floor was spurned,
 The vaults unwonted clang returned! —
 One instant's glance around he threw,
 From saddle-bow his pistol drew.
 Grimly determined was his look!
 His charger with the spurs he strook —
 All scattered backward as he came,
 For all knew Bertram Risingham!
 Three bounds that noble courser gave;
 The first has reached the central nave,
 The second cleared the chancel wide,
 The third — he was at Wycliffe's side!
 Full levelled at the baron's head,
 Rung the report — the bullet sped —
 And to his long account, and last,
 Without a groan dark Oswald past!
 All was so quick, that it might seem
 A flash of lightning, or a dream.

XXXIII.

While yet the smoke the deed conceals,
 Bertram his ready charger wheels;
 But floundered on the pavement floor
 The steed, and down the rider bore,

And, bursting in the headlong sway,
The faithless saddle-girths gave way.
'Twas while he toiled him to be freed,
And with the rein to raise the steed,
That from amazement's iron trance
All Wycliffe's soldiers waked at once.
Sword, halbert, musquet-butt, their blows
Hailed upon Bertram as he rose;
A score of pikes, with each a wound,
Bore down and pinned him to the ground;
But still his struggling force he rears,
'Gainst hacking brands and stabbing spears;
Thrice from assailants shook him free,
Once gained his feet, and twice his knee.
By tenfold odds oppressed at length,
Despite his struggles and his strength,
He took an hundred mortal wounds,
As mute as fox 'mongst mangling hounds;
And when he died, his parting groan
Had more of laughter than of moan!
— They gazed, as when a lion dies,
And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
But bend their weapons on the slain,
Lest the grim king should rouse again!
Then blow and insult some renewed,
And from the trunk the head had hewed,
But Basil's voice the deed forbade;
A mantle o'er the corse he laid: —

„Fell as he was in act and mind,
He left no bolder heart behind:
Then give him, for a soldier meet,
A soldier's cloak for winding sheet.” —

XXXIV.

No more of death and dying pang,
No more of trump and bugle clang,
Though through the sounding woods there come
Banner and bugle, trump and drum.
Armed with such powers as well had freed
Young Redmond at his utmost need,
And backed with such a band of horse,
As might less ample powers enforce;
Possessed of every proof and sign
That gave an heir to Morthams line,
And yielded to a father's arms
An image of his Edith's charms, —
Mortham is come, to hear and see
Of this strange morn the history.
What saw he? — not the church's floor,
Cumbered with dead and stained with gore;
What heard he? — not the clamorous crowd,
That shout their gratulations loud;
Redmond he saw and heard alone,
Clasped him, and sobbed, „My son, my son!” —

XXXV.

This chanced upon a summer morn,
When yellow waved the heavy corn;
But when brown August o'er the land
Called forth the reapers' busy band,
A gladsome sight the sylvan road
From Eglistone to Mortham showed.
A while the hardy rustic leaves
The task to bind and pile the sheaves,
And maids their sickles fling aside,
To gaze on bridegroom and on bride,
And Childhood's wondering group draws near,
And from the gleaner's hands the ear
Drops, while she folds them for a prayer
And blessing on the lovely pair.
'Twas then the Maid of Rokeby gave
Her plighted troth to Redmond brave;
And Teesdale can remember yet
How Fate to Virtue paid her debt,
And, for their troubles, bade them prove
A lengthened life of peace and love.

Time and Tide had thus their sway,
Yielding, like an April day,
Smiling noon for sullen morrow,
Years of joy for hours of sorrow!

END OF CANTO SIXTH.

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